THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

BEHÁ-ED-DÍN ZOHEIR,

OF EGYPT.

WITH A METRICAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION,
NOTES, AND INTRODUCTION,

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PREFACE.

THE poems of El Behá ZOHEIR, although enjoying a considerable reputation in the East, are absolutely unknown in Europe; with the exception of a few verses quoted by Ibn Khallikán, the Arabic biographer, and one or two short poems cited anonymously in the *Arabian Nights*, I am not aware that a single verse of his poetry has ever been printed or translated. Having while in Egypt become possessed of a copy of his poems, I was so struck with the beauty of the language and the freshness and originality of the thoughts, that I have since made them the companion of my leisure hours, and have long cherished the idea, which I have at length realised, of presenting them to English readers in an English dress.

In the present translation I have rendered the Arabic original as closely as the difference between the two idioms would permit, never allowing myself to make a loose paraphrase for the sake of my own metre. At the same time I have carefully avoided a too literal version, which must have resulted in a quaint and stilted style; believing that the easy and graceful language of the original would be best rendered by endeavouring to turn it into idiomatic English of a similar character. How far I have succeeded in attaining this end I must leave the reader to judge.

Oriental poets are inordinately fond of puns and plays upon words; not, however, necessarily to produce a humorous effect, but as a recognised rhetorical artifice,—a mere conceit or prettiness of language. The sense of a verse in which such a *jeu de mots* occurs is thus often perfectly obvious in the Arabic, while, if translated into any other language, it becomes utterly unintelligible. In

such cases I have either found English words with a similar double meaning, or I have slightly paraphrased the line so as to introduce a similar pun. In a word, I have aimed at producing a translation, which, while it will enable a scholar or student to interpret the text, will convey to the English reader's mind exactly the same impression as the Arabic would to the mind of an Arab.

The principles thus laid down for the translation apply equally to the rhythm of the metrical form in which it is cast. The fact is, that metres, in any language, are not mere arbitrary forms; they grow naturally out of the accentuation of individual words in the language, certain groups of which, of definite length, become more pleasing to the ear than others. Now as the *accent* of various languages often differs even more than the pronunciation, it is obvious that there is an initial difficulty in representing the metres of one language by a similar arrangement of feet or syllables in another. In Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Hindustani, this difficulty is enhanced by the fact that in compositions like the present the *same rhyme* must be repeated in every alternate line; if, then, it were even desirable, it would be impossible to find sufficient rhymes for such a purpose in any European language. Any attempt at servile imitation, therefore, would result in a form of verse unfamiliar to English ears; and this could never represent a form of verse familiar to Arab ears.

Once, and once only, I have attempted this (p. 79); and though I have allowed it to stand as a specimen of one of the forms of Arabic verse, I am fully aware that the experiment is unsuccessful. Such being my views, I have adopted the plan of selecting for each poem an English metre of which the *movement* corresponds, more or less closely, with the movement of the Arabic.

Another difficulty which I had to encounter was the gender of the subjects of many of the poems. El Behá Zoheir, it is true, has many pieces addressed to, or in praise of, women, yet in this he is departing more or less from Oriental usage. The Eastern poets, whether from the habit of keeping women and all

connected with them rigorously in the background, or from the fact that a mystical meaning is often implied in their rhapsodies, do, as a rule, address all their erotic verses in the masculine gender. To such an extent is this carried, that two grave and reverend Doctors of Divinity will often address to each other complimentary stanzas, couched in language which would come more appropriately from the pen of a romantic school-girl. For such cases I have adopted no strict rule. Where the subject of the poem was left vague and undefined, I have generally used the feminine throughout; but where (as in the poem commencing on p. 257) the person addressed was obviously some king or prince, I have used the same gender as the original.

Thanks to the kind assistance I have received from many eminent native scholars, especially from Rizk Allah Hassoun Effendi, a well-known Arabic Poet and savant, and Mons. Abdallah Marrásh, of Paris, I venture to believe that the translation will be found at least accurate, and, as such, I trust that it will prove useful to students of the language.

The present volume is, as far as I know, the first *complete* version of the collected works of any Arabic poet ever published in English. Although, therefore, I feel that it comes far short of the grace and elegance of the original, I hope that it may not be unacceptable, as an attempt to introduce my fellow-countrymen to the productions of the Arab muse.

E. H. PALMER.

ST JOHN'S COLL., CAMBRIDGE,
Nov. 11th, 1876.

TRANSLATION OF THE EDITOR'S ARABIC INTRODUCTION.

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE.

PRAISE be to God who created man, and endowed him with clear speech; and adorned him with "those two least members, the heart and tongue."

The tendency of people in the present day to travel abroad, and to communicate freely with each other, notwithstanding the differences of nationality and religion, and the long distances that separate them, has made the acquisition of foreign languages indispensable to those who desire to journey in distant countries. As a poet has well said,

'Tis by the languages he speaks
  A person's usefulness is gauged.
These will afford the aid he seeks,
  When on important works engaged.

Then persevere, both old and young,
  In learning all the tongues you can.
For you will find each separate tongue
  Will count for you a separate man!

No educated person can have failed to observe that the Poets in every language are, in El Khalil's[1] words, "the lords of language, turning it as they please, and taking licences which are not allowed to others, in the way of giving general or particular meanings to an expression, of putting a diffuse expression concisely, or a concise one diffusely, and in the combination of words and phrases generally."

[1] The inventor of the Arabic system of prosody.

Whoever, then, becomes properly acquainted with the poetry of a language, and has mastered all its niceties and refinements, will never find any difficulty afterwards in the prose writings, or in the vulgar colloquial dialect.

Now when I saw that the illustrious Premier, the learned Doctor, the keen and sagacious Scholar, the tongue of speakers and conqueror of writers, the prodigy of the age, and phenomenon of the period in which he lived,—Abu'l Fadhl ZOHEIR ibn Mohammed el Mohallebi (may God have mercy on him!), the Court secretary, who could soar to any height of eloquence that he pleased,—was an authority in every school of verse, and was remarkable for the versatile character of his poetry, I conceived the idea of printing his Collected Poetical works, and have accordingly set myself to print them, and have added an English Metrical Translation for the benefit of those of both nations—Arabs or Franks—who love poetry. I have moreover supplemented them with a Concise Commentary explaining all obscure allusions or difficult expressions, and giving an account of all the persons and things mentioned in the poems, as well as of the various popular proverbs occurring therein.

The works of El Behá Zoheir were composed at a time when the intercourse between Eastern and Western nations had become greater than at any previous period of modern history, and are especially interesting, as exhibiting the language and thought of the desert, applied to altered circumstances, and modified by more civilizing influences.

In poetry Alexandria seems to have been, what it certainly was in philosophy and theology, the meeting-place of East and West. The inhabitants of the East and West differ so widely in tastes and habits, that we should hardly expect to find a community of ideas existing between an Arabic and an European writer; and yet the works of Eastern authors are filled with proverbs, sentiments, and metaphors, which we are accustomed to regard as peculiarly Western in origin and character. To cite a few examples:—The introduction to the Sháhnáma, the great national Epic of Persia, enunciates, in so many words, the axiom that "Knowledge is

power;" the proverb "L'homme propose et Dieu dispose," exists in Arabic, with even the same alliterative jingle, *el 'abdu yudabbir wa 'llâhu yuḳaddir.* The poems of El Behá Zoheir contain numerous instances of these curious parallels; in one case, addressing his mistress, he says:—

> But oh! beware lest we betray
> The secret of our hopes and fears,
> For I have heard some people say
> That "walls have ears"—

which is absolutely identical with the English proverb.

But it is not only in such details that the works of El Behá Zoheir remind us of the productions of the Western poets; the whole tone of thought, and style of expression, much more closely resemble those of an English courtier of the seventeenth century than of a Mohammedan of the Middle Ages. There is an entire absence of that artificial construction, exaggerated metaphor, and profuse ornateness of style, which render Eastern poetry so distasteful to a Western critic; and in place of these defects we have natural simplicity and epigrammatic terseness, combined with a genial wit, that remind us forcibly of the *Vers de Société* of the English poet Herrick.

In that peculiar trifling of words and sentiments, of which the English poets of the Restoration were so fond, El Behá Zoheir is excessively happy. Take, for instance, the following:

> My heart will flutter when she's near—
> Pray does it very strange appear
> To *dance* when we rejoice?

Even to the hackneyed hyperbole of dying for love he contrives to give a new and original turn:

> Oh! torture not my life in vain,
> But take it once for all away,
> Nor cause me thus with constant pain
> To die and come to life again
> A thousand times a day!

Or this:

Thou art my soul, and all my soul is thine,
  Thou art my life, though stealing life away!
I die of love, then let thy breath divine
  Call me to life again, that so I may

Reveal to men the secrets of the tomb.
  Full well thou knowest that no joys endure;
Come, therefore, ere there come on us our doom,
  That union may our present joy secure—

where he has worked out the last idea more seriously, changing what was a mere prettiness into a really poetic sentiment.

Approaching old age, and the first appearance of grey hairs, furnish him with many pleasing and novel conceits—

Now the night of youth is over, and grey headed dawn is near,
Fare ye well ye tender meetings with the friends I held so dear:
O'er my life these silvery locks are shedding an unwonted light,
And disclosing many follies youth had hidden out of sight.

It is seldom that we see a metaphor so well carried out, or so pregnant with meaning as this;—the contrast between the dark tresses of youth and the white hairs of old age, the sudden awakening from the night of folly and inexperience at the dawn of maturer judgment, and the comparison of the streaks of grey amidst the massy black locks to rays of wisdom lighting up the dark sky of ignorance.

For a delicate turn of expression I may quote his apostrophe to a messenger who had brought him news of his beloved:

Oh! let me look upon thine eyes again,
  For they have looked upon the maid I love!

When polygamy prevails, and women are kept in degrading ignorance, we cannot expect to find much sentiment and affection. The Eastern poets, it is true, are often eloquent on the theme of love, but love with them is either mere sensual admiration or affected passion. The poet either expends his ingenuity in depicting his mistress's charms, and in heightening the colouring by the employment of striking imagery, or he raves about the burning

passion that consumes his bosom. Power and imagination there nearly always is in an Eastern love-song, but feeling and true sentiment are for the most part entirely absent from such compositions. It is precisely in this respect that El Behá Zoheir differs so widely from his co-religionists; his utterances of love come direct from the heart, and are altogether free from conventional affectation. What can be more full of genuine feeling than the tender apology for a blind girl with whom he was in love, beginning

> They called my love a poor blind maid—
> I love her more for that, I said.
> I love her, for she cannot see
> These grey hairs that disfigure me?

But, if an ardent lover, El Behá Zoheir seems to have been an inconstant one, even by his own showing:

> I'm fickle, so at least they say,
>   And blame me for it most severely;
> Because I court one maid to-day,
>   To-morrow love another dearly.

And for this fickleness he accounts by a quaint conceit:

> 'Tis true that though I vow and swear,
>   They find my love is false and hollow,
> Deceiving when it seems most fair,
>   Like lightning when no rain-drops follow.
> You'd like to know, I much suspect,
>   The secret which my conduct covers:
> Well, then, I'm founder of a sect,
>   Grand Master of Peculiar Lovers.

Perhaps nothing in the book is so characteristic of the period in which Zoheir lived, or reflects so vividly the tone of religious thought then prevalent, as these playful allusions to mystic rites and secret fraternities. In order that the reader may appreciate them fully, I must briefly review the religious history of Mohammedanism during the immediately preceding centuries.

On the ruins of the ancient mysteries of the Magian priesthood there arose in Persia, towards the end of the third century of our era, a number of secret associations, which, with the doctrines of

the Zoroastrian religion, combined those fanciful metaphysical speculations which are chiefly known to the European world under the name of Gnosticism. These sects were seven in number :—

1. The Kaiyumersíyeh, or followers of the doctrines of Kaiyumers, the first king of Persia, and, according to the Magian legend, the first created human being.

2. The Zervánîyeh, believers in Zerván Acárana, which in the old Zend language signifies "Unbounded Time." Their doctrine was that Light gave birth to various Persons, all of them spiritual, luminous and divine: but that the greatest of these Persons, named Zerván, doubted something, and Ahrimán, or Satan, came into existence from this doubt.

3. The Zerdushtíyeh, or followers of Zoroaster, the son of Púrasp, who appeared, according to the author of the Shahnámeh, during the reign of Gushtasp (Darius Hystaspes) son of Lorasp, King of Persia.

4. The Thenevíyeh, or Dualists, who believed in two Eternal Principles, and, contrary to the creed of the Magians, held that Light and Darkness were co-eternal.

5. The *Mánevíyeh,* or Manichæans, followers of Manes, son of Fatek, The Wise, who appeared in the time of Shapúr, son of Ardeshír, and was killed by Bahrám, son of Hormuzd, and grandson of Shapúr. His creed was a mixture of Christianity and Fire-worship.

6. The Markúniyeh, who taught that there existed two primal antagonistic principles, Light and Darkness, Father and Son, and that these two, originally hostile, were reconciled by the intervention of a third celestial power, who caused the two to blend, since antagonistic elements will not blend without a Medium. This Medium they held to be lower in rank than the Light, but higher than Darkness, and believed that the visible Universe was the result of this blending and admixture.

7. The Mastekiyeh, or followers of Mastek, who appeared in the reign of Kai Kobád, father of Anushírwan (the contem-

porary of Mohammed). He succeeded in converting Kobád, but Anushírwán, having discovered his infamous imposture, sought him out and put him to death. He used to decry alike love, hatred, and war, and, since these for the most part arose about women and wealth, he declared both to be common property to all, like fire, water, or pasturage. Their tenets, religious and political, were almost identical with those of the Communists of the present day, their avowed object being the abolition of all existing religions, universal equality, and community of property and women.

When the Arabs became masters of Persia, their various sects exercised, as might have been expected, an important influence on El Islám, and the severe monotheism of Mohammed soon became tainted with the theories of Sabæan philosophy. The contest for the succession among the immediate survivors of Mohammed afforded an opportunity for the two parties to join issue; the cause of Ali and his family was espoused by the Persian party, while the Arab party favoured Mo'áwiyeh and his adherents. In this way arose the first great schism in Mohammedanism, that of Sunni and Shiah; a schism which perpetuated the old hatred between the Semitic and Japhetic races—between the Jew and Gentile. For several centuries these doctrines went on acquiring more and more currency amongst Mohammedans, and frequent insurrections and fresh schisms were the result.

In A. D. 910, 'Obeid-allah, surnamed El Mehdi, a heresiarch of this school, made himself master of Egypt, and claiming to be descended from Fatima, daughter of Mohammed and wife of 'Ali, succeeded in establishing himself as a rival to the Abbasside Caliph of Baghdad—a kind of Anti-Pope in Islam. From this moment the Persian Gnostic heresy prevailed in Egypt; it was propagated by official agents, of whom the chief was called *Dá'í ud du'át*, or "Supreme missionary," and associations, almost identical in their constitution with modern Freemasonry, were founded in Cairo under the name of *Mejális el Hikmeh*, or "Scientific meetings;" the building in which they were held being

called *Dár al Hikmeh*, or "The Scientific Lodge." The doctrines thus taught were known by the name of Ishmaelite, and were extensively propagated in Syria, where they gave birth subsequently to the Druze, Assassins, and other notorious sects, amongst which I should be strongly inclined to number the nominally Christian order of Knights Templars.

The Sultan, Saladin, who compassed the final destruction of the Fatemite Caliphate, and re-established, in name at least, the authority of the house of Abbas, was a rigid adherent of the Sunni sect; and his first act, on assuming the independent sovereignty, was to obliterate every vestige of the Fatemite heresy. The "Scientific lodges" were finally closed, and the formation of secret societies for religious or political purposes was strictly prohibited. The same policy was pursued by the succeeding princes of his house, and thus it is that we find El Behá Zoheir in the reign of El Melek es Salih, the third Sultan of the dynasty, turning into ridicule rites and observances which half a century before were part and parcel of the religion of the state.

The levity with which Zoheir treats themes, usually regarded with extreme reverence by Mohammedans, must be attributed to his antipathy to the Ishmaelite heresy rather than to a want of respect for El Islam itself. The texts and passages of the Corán which he turns into jest are not those which involve any of the broader principles of Monotheism, but rather those which were supposed to shadow forth prophetically the advent of Mehdi, the Mohammedan Messiah, and upon which so many impostors and enthusiasts have, down to the present day, founded their claims to a divine mission.

Thus we find him saying, in words which must sound sheer blasphemy to a Moslem ear:

I am the Prophet of the Latter-day,
  Mine are the Votaries of Love and Youth;
These are my preachers—in my name they pray,
  And own my mission to be Love's own truth.

The poem from which these verses are taken contains a number of similar quotations from the Corán, distorted from their original meaning, and applied to such secular subjects as love and wine; and that too without the excuse of mystic allegory, behind which the Persian poets always take shelter from the charge of irreverence. However, the use of such technical terms as *Dá'í*, "Preacher or missionary;" *shiah*, "votary;" *Sáhib ez Zemán*, "Lord of the Latter-Day," &c., leaves no doubt but that the covert satire is aimed exclusively against the opponents of the Sunni creed.

That Zoheir was perfectly capable of regarding religion with becoming reverence, and even of standing up manfully in its defence, and of employing the formidable weapons of his own wit and eloquence against scoffers and atheists, is amply proved by the following epigram:

A foolish atheist, whom I lately found,
  Alleged Philosophy in his defence.
Said he, "The Arguments I use are sound."
  "Just so," said I; "*all sound* and little *sense*."

"You talk of matters far beyond your reach;
  You're knocking at a closed-up door," said I.
Said he, "You cannot understand my speech."
  "I'm not King Solomon," was my reply.

The sting of the satire lies in the allusion to the Moslem legend, that King Solomon understood the language of *beasts*.

Solomon and his miraculous power over the spirits of earth and air are favourite subjects with El Behá Zoheir, as with most Arabic poets. Thus, apostrophizing the Zephyr, and beseeching it to carry a message to his beloved, he says:

And now I bid the very wind
  To speed my loving message on,
As though I might its fury bind,
  Like Solomon.

These constant allusions to the history and traditions of the Arabs, make the Diván of El Behá Zoheir particularly valuable as a repository of Oriental learning.

When we remember the servile adulation which Eastern despots are accustomed to exact from those about them, and the unworthy behaviour to which their favourites are too often compelled to descend, it speaks volumes for El Behá Zoheir's high character and principles, that he was able to retain his position at court for so many years without the least sacrifice of his self-respect. But that such was the case his own poems show: a free and independent spirit breathes through them all; and the rebukes which he occasionally administers to persons high in office, from whom he has received a real or fancied slight, are as frank and outspoken as they are free from ill temper and querulousness. Take, for example, the following remonstrance addressed to the Vizier Fakhr ed din, from whose door he had been rudely repulsed by the domestics:

My wrath is kindled for the sake
  Of Courtesy, whose lord thou art;
  For thee I take it so to heart,
No umbrage for myself I take.

But be thy treatment what it will,
  I cannot this affront forget:
  I am not used to insult yet,
And blush at its remembrance still.

Although Eastern poetry abounds in glowing imagery, and in metaphors drawn from natural objects, such as trees and flowers, rocks and streams, yet it must be confessed that a real appreciation of natural beauty is rarely exhibited either by Arabic or Persian authors. Behá ed dín Zoheir, on the contrary, seems to have been a passionate lover of Nature, and to have derived the keenest enjoyment from the contemplation of her beauties. Witness his description of a garden upon the banks of his own majestic Nile:

I took my pleasure in a garden bright—
  Ah that our happiest hours so quickly pass!
That time should be so rapid in its flight.
Therein my soul accomplished its delight,
  And life was fresher than the green young grass.

There rain-drops trickle through the warm still air,
  The cloud-born firstlings of the summer-skies;
Full oft I stroll in early morning there
When, like a pearl upon a bosom fair,
  The glistening dewdrop on the sapling lies.

There the young flowerets with sweet perfume blow,
  There feathery palms their pendent clusters hold,
Like foxes' brushes waving to and fro;
There every evening comes the after-glow,
  Tipping the leaflets with its liquid gold.

Can anything be more graceful than the comparison of the dew-drops on the branches to pearl beads on a maiden's neck? The vivid picture of the after-glow will be appreciated by any one who is familiar with Mr Elijah Walton's exquisite sketches of Egyptian scenery, or who has been fortunate enough to witness a sunset on the Nile.

Behá ed dín Zoheir is eminently the poet of sentiment, and shows but little sympathy with the metaphysical school of philosophy. As if, however, to display his wonderful versatility of genius, he occasionally breaks out into strains as mystic as those of Háfiz himself, the arch-priest of metaphysical poets. Elsewhere his Anacreontic utterances are innocent of any allegorical interpretation.

The author of these poems was a master of satirical verse, but in panegyric he is less happy. Nor is this to be wondered at, for the official congratulatory verses of a poet-laureate are seldom to be compared with the spontaneous efforts of his own unfettered genius. But even here, if not always strictly poetical, Zoheir is always original.

These compositions have, nevertheless, a special interest of their own, inasmuch as they contain many allusions and details which are of the greatest use in enabling us to understand the history of the period, and in making us acquainted with the personal character of the principal actors therein.

In this edition I have followed the small copy lithographed at Cairo in A.H. 1278 = A.D. 1861; but as the text of the copy in question was so full of errors, and so misquoted and misprinted as to be quite untrustworthy, and often unintelligible, I have carefully collated it with two Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. One of these (marked Hunt 337) is without date, but appears to

be very old, and of about the same period as the author of the work; the other (marked Laud A. 86) was written in A.H. 1035 = A.D. 1635, and is the edition compiled by the Sheref ed dín, who is spoken of in the following memoir of the Author by Ibn Khallikán.

E. H. PALMER.

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, 1875.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF BEHÁ EDDÍN ZOHEIR,

FROM THE "LIVES OF EMINENT MEN" BY IBN KHALLIKÁN.

EL BEHÁ ZOHEIR.

Abu'l Fadhl ZOHEIR ibn Mohammed ibn 'Ali 'bn Yahyá 'bn al Hasan ibn Ja'far ibn Mansúr ibn 'Asim el Mohallebi, el 'Atakí, surnamed BEHÁ ED DÍN[1], the Secretary, was one of the most accomplished men of his time, and not only the best writer of prose and verse, but the best calligraphist. He was attached to the service of the Sultan, el melik es Sálih Nejm ed dín Abu'l fath Aiyúb[2], son of el melik el Kámil, in Egypt, and accompanied that prince to the East (Mesopotamia), and remained there until el melik es Sálih obtained possession of Damascus. He then removed to that city with his master, and remained there until the well-known mis-

[1] Behá ed dín means "the Splendour of Religion."

[2] El Melik es Sálih Najm ed din, was a son of El Melik el Kamil, a grandson of the brother and successor of Saladin. When El Melik el Kamil died, his eldest son, El 'Adíl, ascended the throne of Egypt; but El Melik es Sálih, who had previously obtained possession of Damascus, set off from that city with the intention of dethroning his brother and usurping the sovereignty. He had already reached Nablús when his uncle, 'Imád ed dín, lord of Baalbekk, made common cause with Asad ed din Shirkoh, Prince of Emessa, and burst into Damascus with his troops. This event, which happened in September, 1239 A.D., caused a profound sensation in the country, and the soldiers of Es Sálih, alarmed for the safety of their homes and families, hastened back to Damascus, leaving their chief at Nablús with only a few attendants, amongst whom was the poet El Behá Zoheir. El Melik en Násir, Prince of Kerek, at once made for the spot, and, taking advantage of Es Sálih's defenceless condition, carried him off a prisoner to the fortress of Kerek in Moab. Here he remained until June, 1240 A.D., when he was released and recalled to Egypt by the Emírs of his brother El 'Adil, who had deposed that prince and thrown him into prison. El Melik es Sálih was then proclaimed Sultan of Egypt, and exercised his authority with great moderation and justice, repairing the mosques and other public buildings, and winning the affection of the people by his liberality and kindness.

fortunes happened to el melik es Sálih[1], when Damascus revolted against his authority, and his army played him false whilst he was at Nablus, and deserted him. His cousin, el melik en Násir Dá'úd, Prince of Kerek, then seized upon him and threw him in chains into the fortress of Kerek. Behá ed dín himself in the mean time remained at Nablus, watching over his master's interests, and would not attach himself to any one else; this course he pursued until el melik es Sálih escaped from prison and gained possession of Egypt, when he proceeded thither in his service.

This happened about the end of the month of Dhu'l Ka'dah A.H. 637 = June A.D. 1240, and is described in detail in the life of El Melik el Kámil Mohammed, to which the reader is referred.

I was at the time residing at Cairo, and wished to meet him when first I heard of him; and when at length he arrived I did meet him, and found him far surpassing all that I heard of his good nature, and of his great affability and gentleness of disposition. He possessed great influence with his master, who esteemed him greatly, and never entrusted his secrets to any one else. But for all this, he never used his influence except for good, and he benefited many people by his kind intervention and good offices. He recited to me many pieces of his poetry, amongst them the following:

O "Beauty's Garden"! come to me,
  There's nought to frown or lower at;
For where would you a garden see,
  Without its little "Floweret"?

Again he recited to me as his own:

How shall I gain release, at last,
  From love that formeth my soul's alloy?
There is a fair one holds me fast
  In love I may never, alas, enjoy!
Would'st thou, O moon! in yonder sky,
  Seek to compare with such as she?
That were aspiring all too high.
  Branch of the desert, let her be!
  Graces like her's are not for thee.

People began to blame me, then
  Rose up her beauty to plead my case.

Gracious heavens! what wondrous pen
  Did the *waw*[1] of her ringlet trace?
See how her charms she doth enhance
  By beauty-spots on her cheeks so fair.
She passed me by with a saucy glance,
  As who should say "Follow me if you dare!"
How shall I hope of her mien to tell—
Say, have ye seen a young gazelle?

Though she has never a fault, her eyes
  Languishing, dark, and drooping are.
Bright and happy her moon doth rise,
  Ah! but its rays eclipse my star.
Thou who withholdest thy love so sweet,
  With hate so bitter thou'rt far too free;
Surely thou would'st not deem it meet
  That I should perish wrongfully,
  Dying in vain for love of thee.

He also recited to me as his own:

I am thine own, Zoheir by name,
Thy bounty is my Muzeina[2].
I love the Beauty that decks thy fame,
As though it were my Butheina[3]!
Ask thine own bosom about the same,
For 'tis, in such things, Juheina[4].

He also repeated to me another poem, of which I only remember the following two couplets:

Thou! Narcissus eye of her thou drink'st thy fill
At my heart's blood, yet how drooping art thou still!
* * * * *
Ne'er was any one who acted like to thee,
Nought in all the world could e'er so perfect be!

All his poetry is elegant and, as they say, unassailable ground. He gave me a certificate of proficiency in the study of his collected poems, which are very numerous and popular; I need not, there-

[1] The letter و.

[2] Zoheir was the name of an ancient Arabic poet descended from Muzeina 'bn 'Odd ibn Tabikha.

[3] The loves of Jamîl (Beauty) and Butheina are a commonplace of Arab romance.

[4] Alluding to the ancient Arab proverb "Exact information may be had from Juheina."

fore, quote any more of his pieces. Jemál ed din abu'l Hasan Yahyá 'bn Matrúh (whose life will be given later on under the letter ى) told me that he once wrote to him, being his intimate friend, the following lines:

Thy bounties flow so thick and fast,—
Long may thy life of goodness last!—
No longer Harim's gifts admire,
He is not nobler than Zoheir[1].

Behá ed dín himself told me that he went to Mosul on a mission from his patron El Melik es Salíh, while he was in the East; and that there was then residing at Mosul our friend the Emír Sheref ed dín Abu 'Abbás Ahmed ibn Mohammed ibn Abi 'l wefá 'bn Khattáb, commonly known as Ibn el Haláwí, whose family originally resided at Mosul, though he was himself a Damascene by birth. The latter met him, and addressed a long panegyric in his honour, in which he displayed considerable excellence, and in which the following verse occurs:

You publish them, and you requite
The poets who in verses write.
Then, prithee, come and tell me now,
Zoheir or Harim, which art thou?

On his return from Mosul he met the above-mentioned Jemál ed dín ibn Matrúh, who was much pleased with the verse in question, and wrote the two verses quoted above.

Ibn el Halawi's verse refers to the words of Ibn el Kasam, an excellent poet, in praise of ed dáí (missionary) Seba 'bn Ahmed es Suleihí, one of the kings of Yemen:

Whene'er that warrior chief I praise,
  The Son of Ahmed hight,
He payeth me, and with his lays
  My praises doth requite.

For verse with verse he makes return,
  And gives me too his gold;—
So while my interest I earn,
  My capital I hold!

[1] Zoheir also the celebrated ancient Arab poet mentioned in note 2 on the previous page, and Harim, famous for liberality, was his patron.

Behá ed dín told me that he was born on the 5th of Dhú'l Hijjeh in the year 581 of the Hijra (February A.D. 1186) at Mecca, and on another occasion he told me that he was born at Wády Nakhleh, which is in the neighbourhood of Mecca; God knows which is right!

It was the poet himself, too, who related to me his pedigree as I have given it above, and told me that he traced his descent to Abu Sufra[1], whose life is given later on. I wrote this memoir while he was still alive, but leading a secluded life at his own house after the death of his master (A. H. 647=A. D. 1249). Then there happened a great epidemic at Cairo, from which hardly any one escaped; it began on Thursday the 24th of Shawwál A. H. 656, and Behá ed dín was one of those attacked by it. He survived a few days, and then expired a little before sunset on Sunday the 4th of Dhu'l Ka'deh in the same year (November A. D. 1258) and was buried the next day after midday prayers, at the Ḳaráfet eṣ Sughrá, in a grave close by the mausoleum of the Imám Sháfi'y[2] (may God bless him!) on the south side.

I was unfortunately not able to attend the funeral myself (may God have mercy on him!), being prevented by an attack of the epidemic; but as soon as I had sufficiently recovered, I went to his grave and mourned for him, and read a portion of the Corán over him for the sake of our old acquaintance.

[1] A general of the Caliph 'Abd el Melik, builder of the famous mosque of Jerusalem.

[2] Founder of the Mohammedan sect to which the princes of the house of Saladin belonged.

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL THE COMPASSIONATE. P. 1.

THE PREFACE of the accomplished Minister, the eloquent, eminent, and learned chief, BEHÁ ED DÍN, Abu 'l Fadhl, ZOHEIR, ibn Mohammed ibn 'Alí 'bn Yahyá 'bn al Hasan ibn Jáfer ibn Mansúr ibn 'Aṣim el Mohallebí, es Sálihí, el Fátikí el Misrí el Azadí el Kátib (Secretary): may God irrigate his grave with the rain-cloud of His mercy:

After the praise of God which sufficeth, and after praying for peace upon His servants whom He hath chosen; it has occurred to me to record in these pages the verses which I chanced to compose in my younger days, arranging them in alphabetical order for more convenient reference. And God it is who preordains events and facilitates the right.

P. 2.

DEDICATION.

THEE alone in my verses I mention,
  Of thee and thy justice I sing;
And I ask but for one condescension,
  Thou wilt take the poor gift which I bring.
I talk in my outspoken ditty
  Like a frank friend to one he holds dear;
Then regard my shortcomings with pity,
  And lend me thine ear.

Thou'rt afraid to come near me, I warrant,
  For fear lest a flood should arise
When thou seest that I weep such a torrent,
  And heave such tempestuous sighs;
But the magic of Love—were a quarter
  Of what thou professedst sincere—
Would have taught thee to walk on the water
  Without any fear.

Or if, as I grieve in this fashion,
  My groans are a source of alarm,
Lest the terrible heat of my passion
  Should do thee some bodily harm;
Join the dervishes' ranks and discover
  The secret Rifáīyans[1] claim,
And then, like a fire-king and lover,
  Plunge into the flame.

[1] A sect of dervishes in Egypt who pretend to miraculous powers, especially that of passing through fire unharmed.

May the love thou didst give be escheated
  If another should rob thee of mine,
Or if e'er I forget thee, though seated,
  'Midst Houris in mansions divine.
Oh, that love! what a debt do I owe it;
  For I strive after honour and fame,
That thou mayest call me thy poet,
  And hear of my name.

A PRAYER.

My prayers for thee rise up on high,
  And throng around the heavenly gate;
God grant thou look with pitying eye
  Upon thy friends of low estate!
To meet thee were a joy as great
  As that of heaven unto me!
God grant me such a happy fate,
  And grant the prayers I make for thee.

THE BORE.

A silly dolt, who wears my life away,
  Has to my side continually stuck,
Close as my most familiar sobriquet,
  That never leaves me—like my wretched luck!

An abject idiot, "high gravel blind:"
  Jeer as you will, he takes it all for praise;
More horrible for his distorted mind
  Than broken faith or loss of prosperous days.

A mote is not so hateful to the eye,
  A foeman's triumph were a lighter shock;
But, *entre nous*, you might as wisely try
  To move a "Hill" or Khansa's brother "Rock."

AN ADIEU.

The hour has come; farewell, farewell!
  Your prayers must speed us on our way.
We're parting now, and who can tell
  If we shall meet another day?

I know what faithful hearts I leave,
  For while within your midst I stayed,
Your words did ne'er my heart deceive,
  Your acts have ne'er my hope betrayed.

With flying colours I depart,
  And leave your hospitable gate,
But gratitude so fills my heart—
  My camels bend beneath the weight.

Small fear have I of thirst or heat,
  As o'er the desert plain I ride;
For should I but your name repeat,
  I'll stand in need of nought beside.

So long as life is spared to me,
  I'll prove a trusty friend and true;
And morn and night my song shall be
  A song of gratitude to you.

ADVERSITY.

[Written to a friend who had lost his ship at sea, with everything on board.]

P. 4. Blame not thy fortune when it seems unkind,
  It doth but take back what it gave before;
Cast up both columns, thou wilt surely find
  Whate'er it takes away it giveth more.

Time moves in cycles, such is Allah's will;
  Nor pain nor pleasure e'er were known to last;
Thou hast thy life, thy chiefest treasure still,
  Grieve not if aught beside be gone and past.

To taste misfortune thou wert not the first:
  So goes the world, nor plays new-fangled tricks.
Things often mend when they are at the worst,
  As lamps burn brighter when we cut the wicks.

A REPLY.

Your letter came and, I declare,
  My longing it expresses quite;
Methinks my heart was standing by,
  Dictating to you what to write.

TO ——, WHOM HE WAS UNABLE TO ACCOMPANY ON A JOURNEY.

You're leaving me, but far or near
  Your form is with me all the same.
I sorrow for your absence, dear,
  Yet have I but myself to blame.

There's one who will your journey share,
  And never from your side depart;
May I commend him to your care?—
  I mean my own fond loving heart.

And if you wish to hear the news
  About me when I'm out of sight,
Just ask him anything you choose,
  And I shall never need to write.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

P. 5. When fortune frowned and friends were few,
I found thee then a friend indeed!
If thou wert all I ever knew,
No other mortal should I need.

I deemed thee like a precious store,
Laid up against an evil day:
Oh! think upon our love of yore,
When thou art roaming far away.

Thou'rt gone, but wheresoe'er thou art,
There too my heart will always be;
Then say, how fares it with my heart?
How fares it, best of friends, with thee?

CONSOLATION.

Comrade, wherefore look so pensive? why this cloud upon your brow?
Will you ever sit in silent sorrow as I see you now?
I've remarked your strange demeanour, and suspect there's something wrong;
Ah! a man when once suspected cannot keep his secret long.
Come and tell me all about it, on me you can quite depend;
Here you have a quiet corner and a sympathizing friend.
Let us have a chat together and discuss our love affairs—
Ah! I'd like to lay a wager which has got the greatest cares!

THE BON-VIVANT.

If a merry blade am I,
What can that to others matter?
Yet my mentor, standing by,
Bores me with his moral chatter.

All in vain I let him preach,
  Whether it annoy or please him;
Or, if I hear out his speech,
  I turn it into jest and tease him.

Ah! the mentor never knows
  What we merry blades are after;
We fool him thus before his nose,
  And burst, behind his back, with laughter.

Times may change, but never fear!
  Let us, friends, carouse and revel;
Send the bottle over here,
  And send the mentor to the devil.

P. 6.

THE "PECULIAR LOVER."

My mentor bids me cease from play;
  I never heed his dull oration;
I make a fool of mentor, nay,
  I make a fool of all creation.

I have a wondrous potent spell,—
  The magic in my poetry lurking;—
The only charm that answers well,
  Or stands the test of always working.

I'm fickle, so at least they say,
  And blame me for it most severely,
Because I court one girl to-day,
  To-morrow love another dearly.

'Tis true that when I vow and swear,
  They find my love is false and hollow;
Deceiving when it seems most fair,
  Like lightning when no rain-drops follow.

You'd like to know, I much suspect,
  What secret my behaviour covers;
Well then, I'm founder of a sect,
  Grand Master of Peculiar Lovers!

There's not a lover in the land,
  But sings to please me while I'm drinking;
While I, upon the other hand,
  Of no one but myself am thinking.

THE BORE.

I'd as lief have the Angel of Death for a guest
As that dolt. Not a friend has he ever possessed;
If you breathed but his name over water, I think
It would make it unfit for a person to drink.

UNAPPRECIATED.

P 7. Shall I linger any longer where at merit men demur?
Where they deem a cur a lion, where a lion's like a cur?
Many a precious pearl of poetry in their honour had I strung;
By my life! the gems were wasted, which before such swine I flung.
Well! the world is not so narrow but a man his way may win,
And the doors are open widely if he choose to enter in.
I have that within my bosom tells me that success is near,
While Ambition gives me earnest of a glorious career.

ON A PRESENT OF FRUIT.

The bananas you sent were delicious, in short,
Like the sender they seem of the very best sort:
Of their perfume and colour and flavour, you'd say
That like musk or like gold or like honey were they.
While the dishes as full as they ever could hold,
Seemed piled with collyrium-boxes of gold.

AN EGYPTIAN GARDEN.

I took my pleasure in a garden bright—
Ah! that our happiest hours so quickly pass;
That time should be so rapid in its flight.—
Therein my soul accomplished her delight,
And life was fresher than the green young grass.

There rain-drops trickle through the warm, still air,
The cloud-born firstlings of the summer skies;
Full oft I stroll in early morning there,
When like a pearl upon a bosom fair,
The glistening dewdrop on the sapling lies.

There the young flowerets with sweet perfume blow; P. 8.
There feathery palms their pendent clusters hold,
Like foxes' brushes waving to and fro;
There every evening comes the after-glow,
Tipping the leaflets with its liquid gold.

Beside that garden flowed the placid Nile.
Oft have I steered my *dahabîyeh*[1] there;
Oft have I landed to repose awhile,
And bask and revel in the sunny smile
Of her whose presence made that place so fair.

A FRAGMENT.

Your absence spoils life's pleasant draught,
And makes me only want to leave it.
When you were by, the cup I quaffed
So gladly, you would scarce believe it.

[1] A Nile pleasure-boat.

IN PRAISE OF THE EMÍR JELDAK SHEHÂB ED DÍN ET TAḲAWÍ, OF DAMIETTA.

God save thee for the puissant prince thou art.
Each morning sun that o'er thy head doth rise,
Doth fresh prosperity and wealth impart.

Glory, to all beside thyself, denies
Approach to her impregnable domain;
Glory's own tent *thy* greatness occupies.

Such rank as this no monarch can attain;
Caesars and emperors with all their pride
May strive to reach it, but they strive in vain.

Ye, who long time with labour lost have tried
To find the source of liberality;
Seek it in Jeldak and in none beside.

If 'tis thy fortune Jeldak's guest to be,
Then shalt thou find him as of old men found
The sons of Jewwád el Mohallebi.

The son of Aus praised Málik[1] the renowned;
The son of Ḳais praised Musáb; but I could
On nobler deeds my praise of Jeldak ground.

Had 'Ijlí known how noble was his blood,
He had not chosen the examples bright
Of Ḥosheb and of 'Iḳrimah the Good[1].

Great Jeldak doth consistently delight
In acts of kindness, while all other men,
Like the chameleon, change from black to white.

[1] These and similar allusions are explained in the Notes to the Arabic text.

Wáïl[1] would die a ransom for my pen, P. 9.
  Ya'rab[1] would own my verse's magic power:
Theirs failed because there was no Jeldak then.

My verse is like a freshly budding flower,
  Or like a glistening pearl as yet unstrung,
Men know not half its merits to this hour.

"Let us go hence, and when I shall have sung
  The praise of Jeldak, thou shalt find repose
From all the cares that have thy bosom wrung."

A generous youth, fair are the gifts he throws
  To all about him with ungrudging hand!
After the mention of such things as those,
  About Umm Jundub no more odes compose!

A REMONSTRANCE.

Addressed to the Vizier Fakhr-ed-dín Abu 'l fatḥ, 'Abd allah, son of the Kaḍhí of Dáraiyá, complaining of the rudeness of some of his servants.

Love that is not bestowed on thee
  I count as thrown away and waste;
  Hope, upon others' bounty placed,
Has borne but little fruit for me.

'Twas love that brought me to thy door,
  Not any need in which I stood;
  But that I love the great and good,
And love thy pleasant converse more.

For former gifts and favours shewn
  My thanks were always duly paid;
  Not thanks wherein the flatterers trade,
But such as honest men may own.

Then why should I before thy gate
  Be treated with discourtesy?
  To others,—surely not to thee
Is due the thing I now relate.

I came to pay a friendly call,
  And lo! they thrust me in the street.
  Where else shall I a welcome meet,
If not within thy festive hall?

I am not an intruder—one
  Who visits at unseemly times;
  I am not one who for his crimes
An honest man would choose to shun.

The servant, it is said, partakes
  Of all his master's natural mood;
  The servant, whether bad or good,
Is only what the master makes.

Has thy refinement failed to reach
  The menials at thy very doors?
  Could not thy manners teach the boors
The common courtesies of speech?

This strange and unexpected slight
  Is hard enough for me to bear;
  And yet a harder thing it were
To be excluded from thy sight.

Although the struggle cost me dear,
  I keep myself perforce away:
  "Love's longings none can e'er allay,"
But I long on and come not near.

P. 10. My wrath is kindled for the sake
  Of courtesy, whose lord thou art:
  For thee, I take it so to heart,
No umbrage for myself I take.

But be thy treatment what it will,
  I cannot this affront forget:
  I am not used to insult yet,
And blush at its remembrance still.

LOVE'S TRIALS.

I whisper, when there's no one by,
  The words on which my hopes depend;
Yet she vouchsafes me no reply.
But, courage! if again I try,
  The tender branch may bend.

I melt away whene'er I hear
  The liquid sweetness of her voice;
My heart will flutter when she's near—
Nor need it very strange appear
  To dance when we rejoice!

Her as my destined fair I view,
  And still I fare with her but badly;
What have I done that I should sue
In vain? Ah! if my fault I knew,
  I'd make atonement gladly.

I look abroad, but never see
  A single heart so hard as thine.
And yet the hardest hearts that be,
Might feel a little sympathy
  For misery like mine.

Am I to count thee friend or foe?
  Thine are not over friendly actions.
I've enemies enough, I know,
Duennas, mentors, rivals,—though
  I laugh at all such factions.

In truth, I have a hard-fought fight
  Against this infidel crusade.
I battle for thy faith and right,
Then come, and to thy own true knight
  Bring strong and present aid.

I lay my bosom's secret bare,
  And doubt and tremble all the while :—
But gazing on thy face so fair,
A happy omen greets me there—
  The beauty of thy smile.

LOVE'S MESSENGER.

P. 11. Thrice welcome to thee, Love's own messenger.
  Now are these tidings sweet for me to know.
Thou bringest greeting unto me from her,
Wherefore God bless thee, and His peace confer
  On thee, so long as summer breezes blow.

Kind youth that comest from a kinder maid ;
  Good youth that utterest a goodly word,
Right glad am I to hear what thou hast said.
The day of meeting shall not be delayed—
  Is't not a great day, this of which I've heard !

Speak of "that willow," or "that flowery vale"—
  Pronounce not openly my Zeinab's name,
But in fair metaphors relate thy tale ;
Things that are lovely form the fittest veil
  To screen her loveliness and her fair fame.

Quote but one beauty, 'twill suggest a score
  Which she possesses, thou wilt have no need
To mention names ; but tell me o'er and o'er
Her gracious words,—I doubted heretofore,
  But now I know that I am blessed indeed.

I will record my story, and indite
  All that has passed between my love and me;
My tears shall trace it, and the book I write
Shall be a manual of the Lover's Rite,
  A text-book for the whole Fraternity.

Lo! but last night a wondrous thing befell.
  As I lay tossing on my restless bed,
The beauteous form of her I love so well
Hovered about me: but, alas! the spell
  Broke as I clasped her, and the vision fled.

Fled, ere my heart had compassed its delight.
  Had I offended her in word or deed?
Or did she see me on that darksome night
Murdered by love, and in the sudden fright,
  Back to the safety of her chamber speed?

AMOR IN EXCELSIS.

I love a maiden as bright as the sun, P. 12.
Though the sun has never her beauty seen[1].
And oh! the manifold risks I run,
From the argus-eyes of her guardians keen!
For they hem her in with lances and horse,
And the squadrons muster in mighty force;
And her *pages* crowd round till the *written one*
Which I send her can never creep in between.
And I fear that if even the gentle gale
With a message of love from me were bound,
It could never pierce through the terrible pale
Of spears and maces which hedge her round.
I have little to boast of her favours shown,
But I live on chimerical hopes alone,
And I'm jealous of even a written tale,
Where the letters that form her name are found.

[1] Alluding to the strict seclusion in which noble ladies live in the East.

FRAGMENT.

I lately heard a story—of its kind
  Surpassing all I ever heard before.
The more I turn it over in my mind,
  I only wonder at it more and more.
Here are its details, and I'm sure you'll find
'Twill please you if to listen you're inclined.

* * * * * *

THE SEEKER SOUGHT.

Thy kindly-worded message duly came—
  I loved the bearer for the love he brought.—
He asked a favour; I would ask the same:
  Wherefore to-day "I am a seeker sought."

THE GREY-HEADED YOUTH.

The maiden looked on me and fled;
"Why! what is this, Zoheir?" she said.
She saw the locks upon my brow
Were getting silvery even now;
And yet I am a sprig, in truth,
All pliant with the sap of youth.
She could not understand, she said,
A young man with a hoary head.
"You can't be getting grey!" she cried.
Alas! 'twas not to be denied:
P. 13. For she had left me, and the shock
Affected every raven lock,
Making me grey before my time,
Though scarcely in my youthful prime.

I loved when Love itself was young;
And love has often from me wrung
The second letter of the word!
The saddest letter ever heard[1].
I never saw a heart like mine
Tormented by the pang divine!
Erewhile I scorned her ardent gaze,
And now my heart is in a blaze.
I let my mentor have his way,
Whatever he may choose to say.
Abuse, reproof, contempt, or blame—
I look upon them all the same.
But where I have him on the hip
Is in my smooth and saucy lip.
With love and youth intoxicate,
I care not who may see my state;—
"Lover, gay-deceiver, rake,—
Delight in all such names I take.
I throw my self-respect aside,
Nay, in its loss I take a pride;
And, lest there should be any doubt,
Myself I blurt my secret out.
Let mentor in his anger die—
My love is true, so what care I!
Where is our mirth, unless we pass
From hand to hand the foaming glass?
Where is our joy, unless we be
In the beloved one's company?
Love commands me to rejoice,
And I obey his warning voice;
Altho' religion bids me pray,
And turn me from my evil way.
But, after all, I put my trust
In one who is both good and just:

[1] He refers to the interjection "O!" The quibble exists in the original Arabic.

And "hopes in good men," proverbs say,
"Are never lost or thrown away."
In sweet forgiveness all delight,
So here am I a sinful wight;—
And could forgiveness ever live
Without a sinner to forgive?

"CONFUSIONS OF A WASTED YOUTH."

P. 14. Youth has fled ere I have tasted joys that should have been my lot;
Fair were youth in seeming but for follies which its pages blot.
I have sent my tears behind it, haply it may come again.—
No alas! it neither hears nor answers, and I call in vain.
Well! The night of youth is over, and greyheaded morn is near;
Fare ye well, ye tender meetings with the friends I held so dear!
O'er my life these silvery locks are shedding an unwonted light,
And revealing many follies youth had hidden out of sight.
Yet though age is stealing o'er me, still I love the festive throng,
Still I love a pleasant fellow and a pleasant merry song;
Still I love the ancient tryst, altho' the trysting time is o'er,
And the tender maid that ne'er may yield to my caresses more;
Still I love the sparkling wine-cup which the saucy maidens fill,
And I revel in the pearly whiteness of their bosoms still.
How long have I hid my passion? God alone the secret knows—
God whom now I ask for pardon, God from whom forgiveness flows.

"NOT YET."

P. 15. Ye halcyon days of youth and love farewell!
Thrice welcome, hoary-headed age, to thee!
Thou that departest, I have loved thee well;
Thou that approachest, thou art dear to me.

Ne'er must I follow youth and love again,
  Their laws these white and reverend locks repeal.
Still in my vigorous age some traits remain
  Of the old ardour which I used to feel.

Friend of my youth! to see thy face I yearn,
  Whene'er the lightning lights the summer sky;
Fain would I ask, and of thy welfare learn,
  From every gentle breeze that passes by.

Over my life thy constant love hath shed
  Such lustre, that the radiance which I wear
Grows into shape, assuming on my head
  The false appearance of this silvery hair.

Bid me not give up yet my youthful bliss;
  These are not silvery threads that fringe my lip,—
'Tis but the light of one bright mouth I kiss
  Clings to my beard and sparkles at the tip.

I praised the likeness that exists between
  Her teeth so dazzling and my locks so white.
Alas! the tell-tale hairs were scarcely seen,
  'Ere she I loved was saddened at the sight.

She wept to see the unpropitious sign,
  But soon, ah me! she turned away in scorn;
Her face was white, and so, alas! was mine——
  Black were the hue that mine should then have worn.

Though passion shake me till I well-nigh fall,
  Yet will I stoop to nothing base or mean;
My proud position riseth over all,
  Yet hath no friend my pride unduly seen.

I love Rebáb and Zeinab, so ye say: P. 16.
  Ask both fair maidens if this be not truth.
At least they live in many a lively lay,
  Sung by a certain famed poetic youth!

GOOD NEWS.

Zeid told me of "the graceful willow tree,"
And brought me word about "the flowery mead."
"Oh, Zeid!" I said, "this is good news for me,
Thy sweet discourse rejoiceth me indeed.

"Continue, prithee, in this pleasant strain,
Thy words such sweet surprise and wonder move.
Oh! let me look upon thine eyes again,
For they have looked upon the maid I love!"

ON RECEIVING A LETTER.

From my lord a letter there lately came:
No water was purer, no honey so sweet;
And I kissed the letters that formed his name,
As I'll kiss my love if we ever meet.

Oh! the beauties that shine in each elegant line,
And the pretty conceits the words enfold;
I have stored them all up in this bosom of mine,
For they're much too good to be written in gold.

Oh! my lord and master of high degree,
In greatness, glory, and fair renown;
Thou climbest right up to the top of the tree,
As fast as others come rolling down.

And honour, that seemed beyond thy reach,
Thou takest as out of a heap hard by;
P. 17. I blush to address thee in my poor speech,
For a pearl art thou, and a bead am I.

A LETTER.

What is this? a friendly letter written by a master's hand?
Or a little flower whose petals gentle summer gales expand?
When I saw it, then I cried out "Welcome, welcome!" at the
sight;
When I read it, then my body trembled with intense delight,
And I fancied for the moment youth had not yet taken flight.

A WELCOME.

Thrice welcome to you, noble sir!
Your kindness I shall ne'er forget;
Such honour as you now confer,
This humble roof hath rarely met.
To day shall in my calendar
Amongst the lucky days be set.

TO A FRIEND WHO HAD "CUT" HIM. P. 18.

You pass me and never say "how do you do,"
As you'd pass some unpleasant or ruinous scene.
I'm sincere as the creed of the Ḳoran, but you
Seem afraid to come near me, because you're unclean!
Have you then quite forgotten our friendship of yore,
When we seemed to the world to be brothers or more?

AN INVITATION.

You're noble, generous, and brave,
Your converse is a pure delight;
Wherever "Glory's standards" wave,
You are the hero of the fight.

We flag without your ready wit,
And hope you'll come without delay;
A lamb is cooking on the spit,
With sippets, in your favorite way.

We're hungry too, and cannot wait;
So answer this at once. In short,
You'll come?—and mind that if you're late,
We'll sue you for it in the court.

LOVE IN ABSENCE.

If thou art far off or nigh,
Thou art not absent from mine eye.
But in my life no joy I see,
If thou art not near to me.
Yet, which ever be the case,
In my love thou hast thy place;
P. 19. Thy presence and thy absence prove
Equal in my constant love.
When the loved one holds us dear,
Absent, he is ever near.
Sure am I my hopes in thee
Ne'er will disappointed be.

ON AN "OLD GIRL."

How much longer shall we see you aping every girlish trick?
You're a little out, I fancy, in your reckoning of years.
For the dye and the pomatum which upon your hair you stick,
Is the only thing about you which like youthfulness appears.

What have you to do with favours which from coyish maids are wrung?
People never levy taxes from a ruined site!
The time for love and pleasure is when youths and maids are young;
Young people only in young people's company delight.

I see you walking in the streets in veils of muslin dressed,
  Like an old and worthless volume with a new and handsome back;
When I ask what is beneath them, people set my mind at rest,
  For they say it is a lot of bones put in a leathern sack.

I hear such things about you as I scarcely dare repeat—
  Which have passed into a proverb, noised abroad on every hand:
None but very common people love to loiter in the street,
  And in the streets to gossip you continually stand.

People tell me every lady, who is worthy of the name,
  In the virtuous seclusion of her home prefers to stay.
When I tried to contradict them not a word of answer came, P. 20.
  For against so clear an argument I'd not a word to say.

Why these silly girlish manners when you're past your girlish days?
  The young folk do not want you, therefore take the hint and go.
You pretend to be a lady,—these are not a lady's ways:
  Nay, you wouldn't find such conduct in the lowest of the low.

I would not say I think you are a silly vain old goose,
  Because a goose would feel itself insulted at the phrase.
You'll never get a husband, so you'll find it little use,
  To keep up any longer these ridiculous displays.

A STOLEN MEETING.

I waited at the tryst alone,
  'Till darkness overspread the sky;
When lo! a voice in whispered tone,
  Which told me that my love was nigh.

Oh! how I kissed those little feet,
  That ne'er had to another hied;
Oh! how I kissed that face so sweet,
  Veiled jealously from all beside.

My night, it was a night of bliss,
A glad, tho' sleepless night, I trow!
May God reward my love for this,
As long as summer breezes blow!

She came, and little did she care
What trouble she had thus to take;
And who am I, that she should bear
So many troubles for my sake?

She kept her promise—can it be,
That one like her, a maiden fair,
Should keep her faith with one like me,
A lover, wan and full of care?

My eye was well-nigh drowned in tears,
But she has brought it safe to land;
My heart was crushed with wrongs and fears,
But she stretched out a helping hand.

All thanks to her who on a night
Of peril did her promise keep;
Who came when waned the pale moon's light,
And all the tribe were hushed in sleep.

A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE.

P. 21. Written in answer to a letter from Jemál ed dín Yahyá 'bn Maṭrúḥ, complaining of a severe attack of illness.

Your letter complains that you're feeble and ill,—
But may God from such misery screen us,
And shift it on all those who bear you ill will,
Or who seek to make mischief between us.

Dear soul! your sad message redoubles the woe,
Which my soul heretofore was enduring:
But perhaps 'tis a love-pain, and that, as you know,
Is seldom or ever past curing.

Your sickness and words may be only in fun,
  While there really is nothing the matter;
God grant that there may be a lie in the one,
  And forbid there should be in the latter.

THE REPLY.

Ibn Matrûh, on receiving the preceding letter, answered it as follows, in the same metre.

Oh! thou whom true friendship doth once again move,
  To ask how thy poor friend is faring;
Who lovest me still with a brotherly love,
  And tendest with fatherly caring.

Didst thou see me now lying so helplessly here,
  On a paradox thou would'st be gazing;
For mine eye it is drowned with full many a tear,
  And yet my poor heart is a-blazing.

My body, that once was so goodly in size,
  Is now wasted with trouble and anguish,
'Till even my rivals, with keen searching eyes,
  Look in vain for the spot where I languish.

Or e'en if they see me, they straightway declare
  There is nothing there worthy of noting;
Nothing else but a shadow obscuring the air,
  Where a speck had been recently floating.

And oh! for the love which by night and by day P. 22.
  We ceaselessly bore one another,
Write my epitaph when I am taken away,
  For "a brother oft mourns for a brother."

And let this be the strain: "Here one stranger the more
  In the lonely cold graveyard is lying;
He who never fulfilled any purpose before,
  Fulfils Love's cruel purpose by dying."

IN MEMORIAM.

Sheref ed dín, in his edition of the poet's works, says: "The following lines were sent me by my friend (Zoheir) on the death of my brother, 'Abd el Kádir, on Sunday, 20th. Shábán 641 A. H. = 2nd Feb. 1243 A. D."

Sheref ed dín, in thee we see
A man of great and brilliant parts;
A friend endeared to all our hearts
Thou art, and shalt for ever be.

This sorrow is not thine alone;
For trouble that on thee descends,
Afflicteth us who are thy friends,
And each one mourns it as his own.

We know thy loss—a brother dear,
Endowed with every manly grace;
The scion of a noble race,
A goodly youth, without a peer.

Living, his only aim and pride
Was virtue; he was rich indeed
In that; and God had so decreed,
He died possessed of naught beside.

For this in earliest youth he won
Great honour; herein he surpassed
His fellow boys, and at the last
He leaveth it unto his son.

Men never saw so fair a child,
Accomplished, witty, and polite;
P. 23. A moon, so tender and so bright;
A branch, so pliant and so mild.

Light lie the earth upon his head:
And o'er his body's resting-place,
Full showers of His forgiving grace
May God, in His great mercy, shed.

ON A BRUNETTE.

O ne'er despise the sweet brunette!
  Such dusky charms my heart engage.
I care not for your blondes; I hate
  The sickly tint of hoary age.

UNPLEASANT ACQUAINTANCE.

I've known some troublesome folks, I ween,
  In the course of my short but chequered life,
With whom my portion has never been
  Aught else but worry and trouble and strife.

There are some who try to cheat and deceive,
  And who plausibly lie and falsely swear,
'Till I'm almost compelled their tales to believe,
  They speak so persistently frank and fair.

And there's one, a fellow so wondrous dense,
  For his crimes and follies so known to fame,
That it seems like a breach of common sense
  To utter the wretched numskull's name.

And, the Lord be praised! he hasn't the wit
  To tell what month of the year we're at;
And in all my travels I never lit
  On a sillier, stupider, dolt than that.

And there's yet another; I'm bored to death
  With his wearisome company day and night;
I run away till I'm out of breath,
  But I find no safety in taking flight.

For he hunts me down, till you'd almost think
  I had murdered his brother, or dearest friend,
And honour was forcing him never to shrink
  Till he'd followed me up to the bitter end.

P. 24.
I paid them a visit, you need not talk
  Of the matter, or ask the reason why.—
A bustard that tries to hunt a hawk
  Can only befoul it in passing by[1]!

I saw some tinsel, and deemed it gold;
  I'd a narrow escape, and my labour in vain;
I came as I went; I was thoroughly sold,
  And the trouble I'd taken was all my gain.

AN APOLOGY.

[Written to his friend El Fakíh el Háfiz en Nabíh Ibrahím el Ajhúrí.]

They said, "Nabíh's been here to-day;"
  "He's always welcome here," said I.
"Nabíh's a friend of yours?" said they;
  "Aye, one," said I, "both old and tried."

They said, "He merely wished to shew
  His friendship by a passing call."
Said I, "Where'er such men may go,
  Folks rise to greet them, one and all."

Then up I jumped, with heart elate,
  To honour him; when, sure enough,
They said, "He did not care to wait,
  But left us in a sudden huff."

Now really I was at a loss
  To understand what this could mean,
But fancied that my friend was cross
  At something he had heard or seen.

[1] See note to the Arabic text.

It may be that the generous youth
  By spiteful folks has been misled!
But hang me! if there's any truth
  In any thing they may have said! P. 25.

LOST LOVE.

Oh who shall succour the sleepless eye,
  That must for the loved one weep?
And the weary lids that are never dry,
  Nor closed in gentle sleep.

Alack a day! but the maid was bright,
  Bright as the noonday sun!
(It is but the glare of her beauty's light,
  That makes these tear-drops run.)

Oh, she was fair! a Grecian girl,
  And piercing was her glance;
Like the line of beauty her waving curl,
  Her stature like the lance.

Oh, she was fair! you might have seen
  The trees, where'er she came,
Hang down their heads, so fresh and green,
  For she put them all to shame.

She makes my scattered wits to fly,
  By gathering every charm;
And a random shot from her beaming eye
  Hath wrought me mortal harm.

Oh, she hath taken unusual pains
  My heart and my tears to seize,
And the one she binds in closest chains,
  The other one she frees.

P. 26. And sweeter far than the choicest wine
Is the honey of her lip;
Ah, me! I am drunk with the draught divine,
Who may not even sip!

DISAPPOINTED.

Alas! the messenger I sent
Came empty-handed as he went.
Good heavens! I had ne'er believed
My hopes in you were so deceived.
Ah me! the folks who wish me ill
Have, thanks to you, their wicked will!

ON A EUNUCH.

Confound him for a stupid nigger,
Black in heart, and face, and figure.
They say the brute is black as night:
I think him like "the morning light,
That puts a stop to all delight."

A PANEGYRIC.

[On the Emír en Naṣír el Lamtí; congratulating him on his safe return from the wars.]

Now shall Fortune be forgiven
For the ills with which we've striven,
Since a day like this is given
To bless our favoured age.
In our history's scroll its place is,
Where the reverent penman traces
"In the name of God," that graces
The Ḳorān's holy page.

Time, that chose not to advance it,
Knew its worth, and to enhance it,
Kept me in suspense—perchance it
Would have me know its power.
So the clouds that, swiftly fleeting,
Bring the land such bounteous greeting,
Till it longeth for the meeting,
Withheld their grateful shower.

Oh, miracle of this our clime!
Smiting the arid rock of time,
Who, with thy qualities sublime,
Dost make this world so fair.
Oh, chivalrous as Ahnef hight! P. 27.
Oh, lion of the raging fight!
Oh, Kaab who in thine own despite
Dost thy last cupful share!

Time and distance might us sever,
Yet thou wert not absent ever
From my memory that never
Ceased to hold thee fast.
Had'st thou searched (such love we bore thee),
In the breezes sighing o'er thee,
Then our prayers had come before thee,
Borne on the perfumed blast.

Joy and we had long been parted,
Since the day thy convoy started;
Now we meet again light-hearted,
At this return of thine.
Angels twain have watched beside thee,
Good and evil did betide thee;
But thou'rt nobler since they tried thee,
As fresh-ground falchions shine.

Thee full well have they befriended;
Well we know that they attended
To thy fate, since they contended
By which thou should'st be won.
If Glory's self should do its best
To aid a man in glory's quest,
Then Action may give place to Rest,
And yet the thing be done!

Did he who brought the happy news
Of thy return such guerdon choose,
Not one of us would grudge to lose
Dear life for such a gain.
Be sparing of thy arms and might,
Or thou wilt reach to such a height,
There will be naught for which to fight—
Naught further to attain.

Well may'st thou rest! three sons are thine,
Who shall perpetuate thy line,—
Like those three brilliant stars that shine
On old Orion's breast.
Who in their very cradle bore
Marks of God's guiding hand, and wore
Signs of that worth, with which of yore
Thy ancestors were blest.

Jupiter blessed thy natal hour,
Mars trembled at thy martial power,
Wherefore thy foes are made to cower,
As on that glorious day,
When troops were through the desert led
By thee, and on to victory sped!
As on its shaft the bright spear-head,
Gleamed Lamtí in the fray!

Troops, who on the battle-field
To none in point of bravery yield.
Ne'er have former times revealed
    Such chiefs and such a host.
They are the Age's pride, for lo!
Each is alert to smite the foe.
Glory for each must fain forego
    Her choicest vantage-post.

Thy pleasure is in bounty; few P. 28.
Give even what is justly due;
Whilst thou, as it would seem, dost view
    Gifts as a debt man owes.
Oh! mighty prince who in a breath
Can scatter gifts and deal out death:—
A rain-cloud thou that quickeneth;
    A lion to thy foes.

Thy enterprise the foeman knoweth,
Where'er thy conquering army goeth,
The rich red wine of slaughter floweth
    Over the brimming steel.
Exemplar of the grace divine,
Behold! this humble verse of mine,
A suppliant at thy bounty's shrine,
    Expectantly doth kneel.

Reject not then the pilgrim lay,
Which thus, upon thy holy day,
Doth lift its voice on high, and say,
    "Lord, here I am!" to thee.
A greater far than Harim thou,
'Tis thy Zoheir who seeks thee now,
To whom Muzeineh's son would bow,
    Great poet though he be.

Leave him to prate of Arab ways,
And Arab wars in "yearling" lays;
Hear thy Zoheir recount thy praise
    In choicest "nightly" song.
Had such a theme been found among
The mighty chiefs from Jefnah sprung,
Those barbarous feasts had ne'er been sung
    Where Hassan's guests did throng.

ON A DESIGNING GIRL.

A nasty, pert, and forward minx,
  I hate the very sight of her;
She's very winning, as she thinks,
  But I'm heart-whole in spite of her.
Her face or back, whiche'er I see,
There's nothing there that pleases me.

MEMORIES.

I love in my old, old fashion,
  And who shall say me nay?
They bid me restrain my passion,
  But I cherish it night and day.

My night was a night of pleasure,
  For all that ye choose to preach;
P. 29. My joy might no man measure,
  My glory might no man reach.

A sun that at noon is gleaming,
  A moon that is full and bright:
This at my left was beaming,
  And that shone on my right.

Ah! the time sped fast and faster,
  Ask not what joys they gave;
Methought that the Caliph, my master,
  That night had been my slave.

Though its memory bring me sadness,
  I shall evermore hold it dear;
For I welcomed it in with gladness,
  And I ushered it out with a tear.

GOOD-BYE.

The camel-men were on the move;
  The fatal hour was drawing nigh:
But ere we went away, my love
  Came up to bid a last "good-bye."

She dared not breathe the word "farewell,"
  Lest spiteful folk should overhear.—
When lovers have a tale to tell,
  There always is a listener near.

I wept, and watched her as she took
  Some paces onward weeping sore,
Then turned to give one longing look
  And whisper a "good-bye" once more.

And oh! within my anguished breast
  The quenchless fire of passion burns;
And oh! my life is sore oppressed
  By fickle fortune's tricks and turns.

THE PROPHET OF LOVE.

I work great wonders in Love's mighty name;
  I come to lovers with these words divine:
Small skill had any to declare his flame,
  Till taught to utter it in verse of mine.

I am the Prophet of the Latter Day;
  Mine are the votaries of Love and youth:
These own my mission; in my name they pray,
  And preach Love's gospel in my words of sooth.

P. 30.
My martial drum throughout their army rolls,
  My flaunting standard waving overhead;
My speech doth permeate the hearers' souls,
  And by my eloquence their wits are led.

Where are the lovers? let me now rehearse
  The untold beauties of my faith revealed;
For love "lies sealed with perfume" in my verse,
  And none but precious things are so concealed.

When happy lovers in my path I greet,
  And hail with "Benedicite" the pair,
My blessing soundeth to their ears as sweet
  As "Benedicite" when breathed in prayer.

Now is my doctrine one of highest truth;
  I bear it witness with a mighty sign:
My soul is that of an ingenuous youth,
  And nought but noble attributes are mine.

I care for nothing but at any cost
  To keep my faith when once my troth I plight.
I sorrow long for friends untimely lost:
  My speech is pure, my conduct is upright.

My mind is modest, my regards are chaste;
  And though my wont be silence and reserve,
I own the dictates of refinèd taste,
  And bend to all who may my love deserve.

Dear to my heart are damsels young and fair;
  I love the wanton drooping-eyed gazelle:
But oh! far greater is my love and care
  For her whose name it were not wise to tell.

Men call me lover, and they call me well,
  For well and truly do I play the part;
And Oh how truly! God alone can tell,
  Who knoweth every secret of the heart.

My love, and what a love! by God's good grace P. 31.
  No parting ever shall our peace alloy.
The day on which I gaze upon thy face,
  For me that day is one of two-fold joy.

Thou art my soul, and all my soul is thine;
  Thou art my life, though stealing life away;
I die of love, then let thy breath benign
  Call me to life again, that so I may

Make known to men the secrets of the tomb.
  Full well thou knowest that no joys endure;
Come therefore, ere there come on us our doom,
  That union may our present joy secure.

God bless sweet Egypt! Many a happy dream
  Of bygone days in memory I retrace;
Methinks I look upon the Nile's fair stream,
  With all the myriad craft upon its face.

Recount to me the beauties of the Nile:
  No more of Tigris or Euphrates sing;
Those nights of joy in Gheeza and the Isle,—
  Their memories ever round my heart will cling.

There, where the flowerets on the meadows lie,
And spot the verdure like the peacock's vest;
There, where the azure of the starlit sky
Is all gem-studded, like a falcon's breast.

Where bright Khaleega, like a spotted snake,
Past meads and gardens trails her glittering coil;
There did my love and I our pleasure take.
Oh! love, and love alone, is worth our toil.

There was the pleasure, such as never palls,
Of sense insatiate, and ravished eye:
But now vain sorrowing my spirit galls,
For happy days—for happy days gone by!

A RIDDLE.

P. 32. Tell me, I pray, the name of a town,
Whose letters are four when written down:
Two, if you merely attend to the sound,
And only one if you turn it round[1].

PHILOLOGY.

When I speak of the girl whom I love as my "*missis*[2],"
Our Priscians exclaim, "What a vulgar word this is!"
They pretend that I've made a mistake in the word—
A Zoheir, and speak badly!—it's really absurd.
The fact is, I've *missed* every aim for her sake,
And am only lamenting the *misses* I make.

[1] The answer is *Yáfá*, the Arabic name of Joppa. When written, the Arabic word contains *four letters*; pronounced, it forms the name of the *two letters* ى and ف, *yá* and *fá*; reversed, these letters spell فِي, which is *one particle* (the same Arabic word meaning *letter* and *particle*).

[2] In the original the pun is upon the word سِتِّي = *ma'am*, contracted for سَيِّدَتِي = *ma dame*.

THE BORE.

A stupid dolt I've met of late,
  Has proved a most outrageous bore;
You'd think he were condemned by fate
  To chatter on for evermore.
I'm only glad when he's away;
I'm only lonely should he stay;
He's plagued me now for many a day,
  Lord! when shall I be free once more?

EMANCIPATED.

Yes, the maid is still my joy;
  Love like mine can never change.
What if she be shy and coy?
  That would ne'er my heart estrange.

Yet do I with those I love P. 33.
  Act in one consistent way;
Should the fair inconstant prove,
  I would never bid her stay.

Even if my very heart,—
  Precious tho' that heart may be,—
Chose to play a traitor's part,
  It should dwell no more with me.

All but falsehood I endure,
  Whatsoe'er my love may do.
I'm a lover true and sure:
  But a jealous lover too.

If I see the loved one look
  On another lovingly,
Such a sight I cannot brook—
  Nay, 'tis very death to me.

Mine's a love not freely shown;
  True I answer each that sues,
Yet, as many a one hath known,
  I can with disdain refuse.

Well! 'tis over now and past,
  Just as I had hoped 'twould be;
And my captive heart at last
  Scorns your fetters, and is free!

Yes, my heart is now at peace!
  Though I scarce can tell you how.
Could your love my life increase,
  I would spurn it from me now!

ON AN APPLE.

Many thanks to my love for the apple she sent;
I can see that a gift so ingenious was meant
  To ensure my not keeping whole-hearted;
For its colour resembles the hue of her cheeks,
And the sip of her lip its fine flavour bespeaks,
  While its perfume her touch has imparted.

ADVICE.

P. 34.
Spurn not the mildest man on earth;
  Who knows but some day you may need his aid?
Cloth of soft texture is of greater worth
  Than rougher stuff, when robes are to be made.

CAPRICE.

She swears that she'll deceive no more;
  I swear, no more my court I'll pay;
We've neither kept the oaths we swore,
But this we've done so oft before,
  That, if folks talk, they may.

"Oh! grant me but one hour," say I:
  "To-morrow, dear, I will," says she.
But then she casts that wicked eye
Over the left, and her reply
  But makes a fool of me.

Now had she—you know whom I mean—
  But given an hour, however brief,
Would it so hard a task have been!
Thy love has brought me anguish keen;
  Shall I ne'er find relief?

Oh, torture not my life in vain,
  But take it once for all away;
Nor make me thus, with constant pain,
To die and come to life again
  A thousand times a day!

Thy cruel conduct I can bear,
  And look for grace to Heaven above;
Yet still I seek in my despair,
A refuge in thy mind so fair,
  And in thy soul of love!

Men fancy things of every kind
  About us both, or foul or fair;
But now that love has so refined
My soul and purified my mind,
  Their scrutiny I'll bear.

REPROACH.

The loved one chides, I know not why P. 35.
  I've fallen into such disgrace.
But two clear days have now gone by
  Since last I looked upon his face.

That kindly heart he had of yore,
  What can have turned it now? 'Tis strange!
I did not even think before
  That Fortune could his nature change.

Reproach, that from true friendship springs,
  Offends not,—nay, I hold it dear;
Nor lute nor harp's harmonious strings
  Make sweeter music to my ear.

My friend, the fumes of youth and love
  Have mounted to thy fervent brain!
I did not think that thou wouldst prove
So false—and even now I'll move
  To have the trial o'er again.

"OH NO! WE NEVER MENTION HIM."

I know my friend is vile and base:
  But still I'll give him a good word.
Pray don't investigate the case,
  Nor let the rascal's name be heard.

MISERERE.

P. 36. Oh! Lord, how nigh Thy saving grace!
Thou art my hope and hiding place.
  Oh! Lord, to Thee I bring my woes;
For in my present evil case
  The night of sorrow darker grows;
  Lord! grant me freedom and repose.

ON A BLONDE.

That man, believe me, greatly errs,
Whose heart a dusky maid prefers.
For me, I love my maiden bright,
With teeth of pearl and face of light.
My bright example truth shall be,
For truth is always fair to see.

THE MORNING DRAUGHT.

The gentle gales with languid motion blowing,
The gentle breezes life and health bestowing,
To mirth and joy invite.
Come! for 'tis morning, and the wine is flowing,
Take of yon cup with sparkling liquor glowing,
To chase the shades of lingering night. P. 37.
Take of the fragrant, brilliant, luscious wine,
For every sense in turn enjoys the draught.
Stored in its flask, it is a drink divine;
'Tis a new soul within us when 'tis quaffed.
Stint not! thou scion of a generous line,
Small reck of my poor tortured heart hath that blithe heart of thine.

A PANEGYRIC

[On the honourable Emír Mejd ed dín Isma'íl ibn el Lamṭí].

My love has made my heart so sad;
And who again shall make it glad?
Mine eyes she doth from slumber keep,
And who shall give me leave to sleep?
She bared the sword-blade of her eye,
And those it wounds must surely die.
Even the very wine she quaffed
Was drunken with her beauty's draught.
Her graceful figure bends and sways,
A branch whereon the Zephyr plays.
Oh! thou whose absence wrings my breast,
Will time avail to give it rest?
I spurn remonstrance; as they say,
Advice in love is thrown away.

I love the meadow, and I long
To hear the ring-dove's cooing song.
I love to stray adown the vale,
Where the sweet *shlaḥ*[1] woos the gale;
And amorous songs my spirit move,
Where every word and thought is love.
P. 38. I too sing many impassioned lays,
Atoned for by the chief I praise;
For MEJD ED DÍN'S high rank and worth
Have given my choicest poems birth.
A prince whose hands such gifts dispense,
'Twould seem as though benevolence
Had been their final cause; whose wit
Divines so readily, that it
Exceeds the wondrous tales one hears
Of Shiḳḳ and of Saṭíḥ, the seers.
Chagrin would hurry to their tomb
Those who to envy him presume.
Of such auspicious destiny
Naught but good omens does he see.
In bounty ample is his reach,
And glib his tongue and fair his speech.
Men seek his hospitable hall,
And find a welcome one and all;
His heart whene'er they sue, in short,
Is open as his open court.
His spirit quivers with delight,
When Honour calls him to the fight,
To wield the quivering Indian blade.
Amongst a people who have made
Themselves a great and world-wide fame
For glory, his is Glory's name[2].
True bounty doth with him abound,
For this his house was aye renowned.

[1] A sweet scented herb, which grows in the mountainous districts of Arabia.
[2] Mejd ed dín, "The Glory of the Faith."

Oh, Prince! whose bounties ever rest
On those who choose to make request,
How many a night, how many a day,
Dost thou pursue thy generous way!
And with thy recent honours grace
The ancient honours of thy race!
Such—for to hide the truth were vain—
As none but thee can e'er attain.
Nay, none could ever live to claim
Such honours, such immortal fame;
Though he should live for years untold,
Like Father Noah in times of old!
Hail! thou whose aim is sure indeed, P. 39.
Who dost in everything succeed!
Should peril make us quake with fear,
Thou biddest it to disappear.
Should wrong or tyranny oppress,
Thou givest comfort and redress.

STOLEN GLANCES.

For yon sour eunuch naught care I,
  Nor for his form and face absurd!
The furtive signals of an eye
  Are sweeter than a spoken word.

THE SICK MAN'S VISITOR.

He comes to comfort and condole,
But were a body sound and whole,
  'Twould sicken at the sight of him!
No hint, politely given, he takes,
Plain speaking no impression makes;
He'll never go till life forsakes
  My body, out of fright of him.

A REMONSTRANCE.

When I ask thee of thy welfare, hast thou aught of good to tell?
Nay, methinks, a face (like thine is) never yet did prosper well.

That which others loathe thou lovest; that which erst thou didst begin,
P. 40. Now thou leavest all unfinished, fickle even in thy sin.

Thou to whom *laus semper deo* is a long-forgotten thing,
What hast thou to do with *gloria,* such as men and angels sing?

How much longer, error-blinded, wilt thou live from morn till night,
Choosing for thy boon companions "such as sin and ne'er do right!"

Shall we ever strive to turn thee?—ever strive without success?
"One who will not have a blessing 'tis, alas! in vain to bless."

AN APPEAL.

Nay, never turn and leave me so,
My life, my love, my own!
Alas! but thou dost little know
How fast these scalding tear-drops flow.

Thy cruel conduct wounds my heart,
'Tis that which I bemoan!
All too unjust to me thou art,
Who never played a traitor's part.

If thou canst all this coolness bear,
I cannot rest without thy love.
Oh! when shall I dispel my care
By gazing on thy face so fair?

Within my heart thy love doth dwell,
As thine own heart can prove:
Ask then thy heart, the truth 'twill tell,
For it hath ever loved so well.

YESTERE'EN.

One happy night at least I've passed— P. 41.
Escaped at length from all my cares!—
With her who holds my love as fast
As memory holds our daily prayers.

My love is like a young gazelle,
Appearing on the huntsman's right[1];
And oh! the bargain prospered well,
When she and I our troth did plight.

And not a limb but felt the thrill
Of passion that within me burned,
For both our tongues had learned to trill
The mutual love for which we yearned.

And both our eyes were brimming o'er,
That such a night so short should be.
We parted, and a heart full sore
Is all that she has left to me.

Alas! "to-night and yestere'en
Are not the same." Ye comrades true,—
Who have, perchance, reverses seen,
To whom regrets are nothing new;—

Ye pity me in this my grief,
Ye aid me with your tears, I know,
But "can the widow find relief
In sounds and signs of outward woe?"

[1] Considered a happy omen by the Arabs.

A SONG FOR DAY-BREAK.

[Written at the request of one of the *muezzins*, who wished for some verses to recite at his post at day-break].

Oh! thou who art immersed in sleep,
  Behold the morn is breaking!
Lo! from the east the sunbeams peep,
  Day's proclamation making.
Doth not the sound of him who prays,
  God's name with reverence taking,—
Of hymns in holy Allah's praise,
  Conduce to thine awaking?

    What ails thee, that the voice of those
    Who seek to turn thee from repose
    To pious works of charity
    Availeth nothing unto thee?

P. 42. Nay, though their sound thy body move,
  Thy thoughts are elsewhere straying:
Life fleets in vain—Ah! could'st thou prove
  How great a gain is praying!
They only prosper who can hear
  The voice of Allah saying,
"Such men shall prosper." Morn is near,
  Or good, or ill, displaying.

    Be not despondent, never fear;
    But Allah's gracious message hear:
    IN SORROW, JOY IS NIGH AT HAND!
    DO WE NOT BID THY HEART EXPAND?

ON A BLIND GIRL.

["The author repeated me the following lines on Wednesday, 13th Jumáda I. 644 A. H. (26th Sept. 1246 A. D.) as I was walking with him from Cairo to Old Cairo." SHEREF ED DÍN.]

They called my love a poor blind maid:
I love her more for that, I said;
I love her, for she cannot see
These grey hairs which disfigure me.
We wonder not that wounds are made
By an unsheathed and naked blade;
The marvel is that swords should slay,
While yet within their sheaths they stay.
She is a garden fair, where I
Need fear no guardian's prying eye.
Where, though in beauty blooms the rose,
Narcissuses their eyelids close.

A PANEGYRIC.

[On El Melik en Násir Ṣaláḥ ed dín Yúsuf, son of el Melik el 'Azíz, Moḥammed, son of el Melik ed Dháhir Ghází, son of el Melik Ṣaláḥ ed dín Yúsuf, son of Aiyúb (SALADIN), on the occasion of his gaining possession of Damascus, in 648 A. H. = 1250 A. D. His Majesty had been indisposed, but subsequently recovered]. P. 43.

Thee have I loved unceasingly and well;
For thee I long with sharp and cruel pain;
Oft have I striven all my woes to tell,
Yet have I striven in vain.

For I have that within my inmost heart
I cannot even utter, and I shrink,
By word of mouth, or written page, to impart
The dreadful things I think.

Thou sayest that I have failed in fealty.
'Tis a foul lie that envious tongues have told;
I know not why—unless I chanced to be
Forgetful, drunk, or bold.

To keep my faith, and make my promise good,
Ne'er to be guilty of deceit in love,—
Such is my nature, such my natural mood,
From which I never move.

Ask other men how I have kept my troth,
The which I plighted thee in bygone days.
Ask not of me, for I am very loth
To utter my own praise.

My friend, must I complain for aye? for aye
By hints or words proclaim my misery?
Patience and life, since thou hast turned away,
Are strangers both to me;

And now my tears for those poor strangers run!
Behold! thy image thro' the livelong night
Abode with me; what harm would it have done
To bide till morning light?

By night it came, that fair but fleeting dream,
And at the daybreak swiftly sped away;
Methinks it knew that if the morning beam
Shone on it, 'twould betray!

My sweet young love! although no one would dare
Make light of aught that in her face is found,
Yet does the beauty all-resplendent there
Make light of all around!

P. 44. She captivates me with a strange alloy
Of sweetest body and most *piquante* soul;
For two such opposites does she employ
In one harmonious whole!

How can she swear she slew me not? when I
See my own blood upon her ruddy cheeks!
And when the sword-blade of her flashing eye
Fresh from the slaughter reeks!

Nay more, I have a witness to the deed:
  Her beauty-spot which saw the unhappy chance.
Alas! her evidence they would not heed,
  So dubious is her glance!

But when she smiles, it is indeed divine!
  Her dazzling teeth and ruby lips assume
The phase of bubbles risen on bright red wine,
  Fragrant with rich perfume.

The *miswák*[1] proves the fragrance of her lip,—
  Was ever known a being such as this,
Who, being upright and staid, yet deigns to sip
  And revel in drunken bliss?

Oh! ye, who censure me for loving her,
  I have an answer ready to confute
All you can urge, but that I much prefer
  Avoiding such dispute.

I get nor rest nor respite from your speech,
  But shall, at least, get rest if I remain
Silent; that ye may be assured ye preach
  And censure me in vain.

A slender maid, of swarthy hue, but bright,
  "Divinely tall," her visage like the morn;
As one who, revelling in her beauty's light,
  Walks with great pride and scorn.

Walking as one whom Zephyrs from the mead
  Sway with a gentle motion to and fro,
Whereat the willow droopeth down its head,
  For she doth shame it so.

[1] A stick of medicated wood used by Orientals as a tooth-brush.

As one who, having quaffed the strong wine, feels
  The liquor coursing wildly through each vein,
And, like a well-poised balance, sways and reels,
  And reels and sways again.

As one to whom I may rehearse the praise
  Of YÚSUF, and the thing which I relate
Doth so delight him, that he goes his ways
  With joy intoxicate.

In praise of Náser, great Mohammed's son,
  All hearts roll forth a mighty stream of song;
Hereby they gain great grandeur every one,
  And praise by praise grown strong.

He needs not eulogy nor flattering lays
  From venal poets to ensure his fame;
His many virtues publish forth his praise,
  And his great worth proclaim.

P. 45. The sweetest songster that hath ever sung
  Would find his words fall short of his intent
For such a theme; but Bounty has a tongue
  Itself more eloquent.

Men say the bounty of his open hand
  Is like the rain, that in a ceaseless flow
Pours forth its richest treasures on the land.
  They err; it is not so!

For there are times and seasons when the rain
  Comes not till courted by some magic spell;
But what malignant influence could restrain
  Those gifts we know so well?

Had his largess to be by flattery moved,
  His eye would scatter a largess of tears.
Talk not of Hátim, or of Kaab the good,
  The boasts of former years;

We scarce should count them liberal to-day:
  Nay, even the ministers of Pharaoh's throne,
Compared with our great YÚSUF, what were they?
  If ye the truth will own!

His liberality is not expressed
  By tales of tents—of camels and of sheep
Slaughtered to feed the unexpected guest,
  Ere he retires to sleep.

No, for my Sultán hath such mighty power,—
  Such mighty influence his protection brings,
That e'en the meanest of his slaves can tower
  O'er emperors and kings.

Cities and provinces doth he bestow,
  As though they were the meanest things that be;
What other mortal, I should like to know,
  Could swim in such a sea?

Did any crave the whole world as a boon,
  He would look on it as a mean award!
With frank good-nature he would, prompt and soon,
  The wished-for gift accord.

His copious bounties in full torrents gush,
  As bright Khaleegah rolls down to the sea;
And the great oceans, that upsurge and rush,
  Would sooner drain than he.

Say to the kings of earth, "Do not aspire
  To rival him; for he, who starts at eve,
Will him, who started in the morning, tire,
  And in the distance leave."

Such sweat of modesty bedews his face,
  It drips down from it in a trickling rill!
Yet in his fiery anger may ye trace
  Signs of a sterner will.

So is the tawny lion, as they tell,
Shy and retiring also; yet can none
Of all the beasts of prey more bold and fell
Encounter any one.

His kingly qualities and grace benign,
These clothe our age as with a rich array.
P. 46. His brilliant ancestry like lanthorns shine,
And make the darkness day.

Lords of great wealth, each with a liberal palm,
Broad as the sea, whence gifts come straight to hand;
As swimmers eager, when the sea is calm
Make straight for land.

What brilliant suns from that horizon rise!
What bounteous clouds their grateful showers distil!—
Those sons of Saladin, in whom there lies
Our hope, our refuge still!

Men who attained the arduous heights of fame,
And told aspirants how they ought to climb;
Smoothing the way for other men who came
That road in after time.

And now let fair Damascus celebrate
With joy the day that did thy sickness heal:
For towns experience a joy as great
As individuals feel.

There's not a floweret but with laughter sways;
There's not a grove but rustles with delight;
There's not a branch whereon the zephyr plays,
But glistens fresh and bright.

There's not a bird but trills its sweetest lay;
While from each village lights unnumbered gleam;
The joyous beacon o'er the milky way
Sends forth its garish beam.

Such honour hath this favoured town of thine,
That all mankind would to its walls repair,—
As pilgrim crowds to Mecca's holy shrine—
And make the Circuit there.

Damascus ever has been fair, I know;
But never fairer than it is to-day!—
My wares unto the best of kings I show,
Sure that such trade will pay.

Sure that, so long as Heaven my life shall spare
To serve the king, I shall fresh honours gain;
Sure I shall find relief from every care,
And all my hopes attain;

Sure that our SALADIN, the high, the great, P. 47.
Will mend my fortunes that have gone so ill:
Let others rise to higher rank and state,
Have I not YÚSUF still?

My liege! forgive the boldness of my speech;
Thou hast, ere now, forgiven a greater crime.
What verse can thy exalted station reach,
Or to thy glory climb?

No common speech must be addressed to thee!
In no weak numbers must thy praises live!
Behold my tribute, late although it be,
Accept it, and forgive!

Oh! let thy favour chase my grief away,
And dwell a welcome guest on my right hand:
So shall my pent-up spirit have full play,
And my cramped heart expand.

Grant me the happy privilege to sit
Within the circle of thy friends once more:
Nay, I would fain have—should'st thou deem me fit,—
Half what thou gavest before.

I owe a thousand blessings to thy grace,
  And, even yet, this hope I entertain,
That in thy memory there may be a place
  Reserved for me again.

All speak, or well or ill, and some can sing
  In goodly verse; but this fair verse of mine
Is a choice pearl, and doth more pleasure bring
  Than soul-reviving wine.

A song as gentle as the Zephyr's breath,
  Which one "small flower" hath woven into verse[1]!
A panegyric that shall know not death,
  But future Times rehearse.

SOUND DIVINATION.

P. 48.

Though I complain to thee, I strive to hide
My sad complaint from all the world beside;
But yet I hold it meanness to conceal
From those we love the wants and woes we feel.
Why hide my wants and sorrows from a friend?
Who else their counsel or their aid will lend?
Nay, by my life! as oft as I complain,
His kindness gives me life and hope again.
Though a kind word be all he should impart,
'Twill soothe the sorrows of this aching heart.
Oft have I feared that, when the time should come
For speaking, modesty would hold me dumb;
Until, again, a greater fear arose,
Lest my sad plight should all the truth disclose.
My reticence I carry to excess,
Mourning my loss, bewailing my distress:
Repenting sorely when the time has past,
Till each day brings more sorrow than the last.

[1] Alluding to his name *Zoheir*, "a little flower."

I tested fortune by a magic spell,
And every omen seemed to promise well;
No, 'twas no magic! 'twas the foresight keen
That read the presage of thy gracious mien!
What Shikk, or what Satīh did e'er divine
With omens as infallible as mine?
For not a jot of what I thus forecast,
But proves a sound reality at last!

ON RECEIVING A LETTER.

Thy letter passed o'er time and space, P. 49.
And what a bar was that to span!
Its odour, heralding it, outran
The tardy courier in the race.

The very breeze, as it drew nigh,
Seemed in a vest of fragrance clad:
I'll date my life, renewed and glad,
From when thy letter met my eye[1].

WILFUL NEGLIGENCE.

Though people scold and blame you as they may,
Yet no attention do you ever pay.
Such careless conduct must to ruin lead:
The like of it we neither hear nor read.
"You may be blind, but," as the proverb goes,
"You surely smell the melon 'neath your nose."

[1] The Arabs were accustomed to take various important events as eras from which to date until the *Hijrah*, or flight of Mohammed, superseded them all, and was generally adopted by the confederate tribes.

HOPELESS.

A sapling straight and slender,
  Whereon the Zephyr plays;
Delicate limbs and tender,
  A body that bends and sways.

An idol hath God created
  Most marvellously fair;
And her beauty by Him is fated
  To prove our mortal snare.

P. 50. A wonder I discover
  In this strange love of mine,—
She burns with fire the lover
  That worships at her shrine!

Leaving me here in anguish
  Throughout the sleepless night,
Her lover's eyes may languish,
  Yet these be her troops that fight!

Thou, who in solemn fashion
  Didst chide the love I bore—
Was I the first whose passion
  Wounded his heart to the core?

Full well my fond heart knoweth
  That it hath gone astray;
But none to the lost one sheweth
  How to regain his way.

Hope not for his repentance,
  Seek not his soul to win,
Whose God has passed the sentence
  That he should live in sin.

THE LOVER'S APPEAL.

Why depart from what she swore?
Why forget the love she bore?
Scarce can I the prize attain,
Ere 'tis snatched away again.
She's like two opposing stars,
Soft as Venus, hard as Mars.
Lo! her face a garden shows,—
Cull the myrtle, pluck the rose!
I have nothing else to bring
But these simple songs I sing:
Would that they her love would buy!
Maiden of the tender eye,
Though thy gaze may languid be,
It is far too keen for me.
Absence puts my peace to flight,
Union yet may put it right.
Ah! if she were kind, and gave
Pity to her wretched slave.

BROACHING THE WINE-CASK.

I love her, though she's very proud, P. 51.
And scolds and turns away;
To take a kiss I'm not allowed,
But weep, alas, I may.
I see her in the garden, where
Her cheek blooms like the roses;
Oh, heaven! how sweet, and bright, and fair,
The face which she discloses.

The languor of her drooping eye,
How piercing and how keen!—
A cask of choicest wine have I,
That ninety years has seen.
And I have long made up my mind
That none shall help me broach it,
Till some one of such worth I find,
That none shall dare reproach it.

A pretty maiden too is there,
Whose sweet and winning tones
Would sing away the dullest care,
Would melt the hardest stones.
Her tender and voluptuous lay
Stirs up the hearer's passion.
Thank God for March, and grant that May
Be passed in such gay fashion.

P. 52. * * * * *

TRUTH IN ABSENCE.

Though thou'rt absent from mine eye,
In my mind thou'rt always by.
Be it where it may, thou art
Lord and Master of my heart.

A PANEGYRIC.

[On the Honourable Emír Mejd ed dín ibn Ismaíl ibn el Lamṭí; wishing him the compliments of the month of fasting, Ramaḍhán, 609 A.H. = February, 1213 A.D.]

She said she would come on the morrow,
While asleep on my couch I recline;
But where, in my love and my sorrow,
Can slumber or comfort be mine?
If she love me, why seek thus to slay me?
Nay, were she my deadliest foe,
She could not do worse than betray me
To anguish and woe.

How many a mentor by preaching
Has sought to awaken my fears,
And the eloquent words of his teaching
Have entered in issueless ears.
They bid me beware of a maiden,
Soft-bodied and luscious of mouth,
Who sways like a tree that is laden
With fruits of the south.

The "Gazelle," so they say, she resembles[1],
In brightness, in coming not nigh,—
In the soft neck that quivers and trembles,
In the lustrous dark gaze of her eye.
They say that her stature is handsome, P. 53.
And slim as the branch of a tree,—
All the branches that are be a ransom
For one such as thee!

With the pitiless shaft of her glances,
She pierces me through to the bone,
And heeds not my pain, for she fancies
My heart to be hard as her own.

[1] The sun is called الغزالة "the ghazelle."

By thy love — were it not for the treason
  Of Love and his tyrannous sway,
I had never watched through the night season,
  And longed for the day.

Begone! with your prating and teaching,
  Nor waste on a lover your breath!
Ah! these mentors, if bent upon preaching,
  Will carry it through to the death.
For the lips of the flowerets are smiling,
  Bare branches with verdure grow gay,
And the cloud o'er the hillock is whiling
  The moments away.

And the breeze o'er the meadows is straying;
  And all things to pleasure invite,
When the morning is coyly displaying
  Her face through the veil of the night.
Or when rosy-cheeked evening gloweth,
  And the sighs of the gale through the land
Are as thanks for the bounty that floweth
  From Mejd ed dín's hand.

When they tell of great gifts that are given,
  Men thankfully mention his name;
The rain-cloud of bounteous heaven
  But echoeth feebly his fame.
For freely, with sword or with coffers,
  His hand is accustomed to deal;
An Arabic welcome he offers,
  An Indian steel.

When on his good steed he is mounted
  He towereth on high, till you'd think
He were some thirsty spirit, who counted
  At the Galaxy's fountain to drink.

Or e'er you petition, he readeth
  Your wants, and the favour is won;
And he evermore after proceedeth
  As he hath begun.

It is not the rain-cloud that sheddeth
  The bountiful gifts which we see;
More joy o'er the country he spreadeth,
  Though bounteous the rain-cloud may be.
A noble of Teim's ancient nation,
  Of family ancient and good,
The highest of mortals in station,
  The purest in blood.

They milk blood from the veins they have riven,
  And stanch it with splints from their spear.
All hearts to their friendship are given;
  All hearts are subdued to their fear. P. 54.
And when midst the din of the battle
  The shrieks of the helpless arise,
Their swords with a clangour and rattle
  Respond to the cries.

Thy honour none deems of assailing;
  It towers like a fortress, I ween.
May thy glory continue unfailing,
  Thy sword-edge be evermore keen.
Even furious and obstinate treason
  Submitteth, repressing its wrath;
For none can confute thy sharp reason,
  None walk on thy path.

'Tis a fast; and to thee there is given
  Such power to chastise and reward,
As that which proceedeth from heaven
  On the Night of the Power of the Lord.

May'st thou live, undisturbed and untroubled,
Till a thousand such fast-times are past,
And the blessing thou gainest be doubled
For every fast.

All time is a season of fasting
To thee who art righteous and good;
And life is a Ramadhan lasting
To one of thy temperate mood.
When the reins of thy charger thou takest,
No rosary else dost thou need;
And a mosque for devotion thou makest
The back of thy steed!

TO SOME DISTANT FRIENDS.

Ye know not what I suffer, nor enquire!
Some woes ye wot of, some are left untold;
Absence and grief and tears and vain desire,
A single soul and sorrows manifold.
Oh! for the day, when, ere your love grew cold,
I dwelt in one long heaven of delight!
Grant that I knew not sorrow's ways of old,—
Have ye not done your best to set me right?

I am your slave; if "slaves possess a right
To be respected," then that right have I.
Wherefore neglect the letters which I write?
P. 55. Are they too good to meet with a reply?
Ah! those sweet messages of time gone by,
And all the tokens of our love's young dream!
If I have sinned and under sentence lie,
Let it be aught but loss of your esteem!

I would your messenger came every day,
  That I might make him in mine eye abide,
Or spread my cheeks for carpets in his way.
  Whatever fortune, good or ill, betide,
I hold you dearer than all men beside;
  Peace be upon you, though we parted are.
Alas! 'tis through no fault upon my side
  This salutation cometh from afar.

ON RECEIVING A LETTER.

I received the kind letter, in which you express
That our parting has caused you much grief and distress;
But all the annoyance you suffer, be sure,
Is only a portion of what I endure.
I have never turned traitor to love and to you,
But have really done all that a mortal could do.

A PROMISED VISIT.

You say I may hope for a visit from you;
  If indeed it be so how rejoiced I shall be;
But I fear that the news is too good to be true,
  For I never knew Fortune so gracious to me.

You are the master, the servant am I,
  And my love and my longing are daily increased:
O! when shall the sight of you gladden my eye?
  By my troth! I shall look on that day as a feast.

TRUTH IN ABSENCE.

P. 56.

Ye, who though lost to outward view,
  Are ever present in my heart,
I cherish still, unchanged and true,
  The friendship which of old ye knew.
Nor did I from my word depart,
  But love with absence stronger grew.
Oh when will Time my wish complete,
  And grant that we may once more meet?

ON AN ILL-FAVOURED BORE.

For Heaven's sake my feelings spare,
  And take away that ugly head!
I long with many a fervent prayer
  That you may only cut me dead.
You're neither good for work nor play,
  You're cold as ice, and dull as lead;
I neither wish you a "good day,"
  Nor "good night" when you go to bed.

A WEARY NIGHT.

So hot a night I've never known,
  'Tis feverish as a lover's breast.
I've none to cheer me; all alone
  I bear the heat and want of rest.

It seems so long, I quite believe
  That somehow they've mislaid the morn!
In it a woman might conceive,
  And, ere 'twere past, the child be born!

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Talk of long nights, you would never believe, P. 57.
And you never yet knew such a night as I've passed.
I declare that a woman a child might conceive,
And the offspring be born while one like it should last!
I don't of a single discomfort complain,
For everything happened to add to my pain.

A REMONSTRANCE.

You did this act before the eyes of men;
I could not even such a thing conceive,
To live a life so good and pure—and then
Such lasting stigma on your name to leave.
You too, the cynosure of all men's eyes!
I'll cease to find fault after this surprise.

AN IMPROMPTU.

[Addressed to Nejm ed-dín 'Abd er Raḥmán el Wasíy.]

We're neighbours now, but what has been the gain?
When we speak ill of absence we are wrong;
Absence to me appears the lesser pain,
For meeting only makes desire more strong.

REPLY TO THE ABOVE.

Absence and meeting pain not now; desire
Hath so consumed me that my heart is lost!
All things that touch me quicken at my fire,
Whilst I still linger in a listless frost.

VAIN REGRETS.

P. 58. Ah would that I knew if my miserly luck
Would be generous ever again;
For I'm never by any fresh accident struck,
But it brings me additional pain.

And day after day is frittered away
In idle and profitless speech.
Oh! for the day that I long for and pray,
That shall bring my desire within reach.

FRESH TROUBLES.

Whenever I said, "I am settled at length,"
Some new and strange matter there came;
Some trouble exceeding my patience and strength;
Some toil that brought nothing but blame.

God knows that to suffer such worry and pain
Is a terrible case to be in;
But to any one else, besides God, to complain,
Would be useless as well as a sin.

A LETTER.

[Written from Ámid to some friends in Cairo.]

This note of mine from Ámid dates
With sentiments that love dictates.
Parted from you, no more I seem
To drink at life's untroubled stream.
P. 59. Will fortune aid me to restore
My peace by seeing you once more?
How many solemn vows I make
In every mosque for your dear sake!
The rest of all my life I'd give,
One single day with you to live!

EPIGRAM ON AN ATHEIST.

A foolish atheist, whom I lately found,
  Alleged Philosophy in his defence;
Says he, "The arguments I use are sound."
  "Just so," said I, "*all sound* and *little sense!*"

"You talk of matters far beyond your reach,
  "You're knocking at a closed-up door," said I.
Said he, "You cannot understand my speech."
  "I'm not King Solomon[1]!" was my reply.

THE UNWILLING GUEST.

Ye are all alike and base;
  God diminish such a brood!
Why, good Lord! in all the race
  There is not a man that's good.

Back your suitors bootless go;
  Nay, what should they hope to find?
Goodness?—gracious goodness! no.
  Kindness?—nothing of the kind.

Would I had been spared the shock
  When your faces met my eye!
Or that there had been a block
  On the road I travelled by.

Oh! to leave your town, at last!—
  When may I such bliss expect?—
On a pony sleek and fast,
  Or a camel limber-necked.

[1] Solomon is fabled to have understood the language of birds and *beasts*.

Oh! once more to find my brain
  From your hated memory free;
And to put the desert plain
  Well between us, you and me.

"SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR."

P. 60.

What pleasure can our meeting prove,
Or profit, over and above,
If meeting bear no fruit of love?

Your absence used to grieve me sore,
Until at length we met once more,
And now that absence I deplore.

For this our meeting, in my heart
More grief and agony doth dart,
Than ever absence could impart.

And stronger still grows my desire,
And fiercer burns the inward fire,
And sleepless nights my eyelids tire.

But, though ye do this cruel thing,
And with neglect my bosom wring,
Unchanging, to your love I cling.

And if ye be in happy case,
And God hath given you health and grace,
My fondest wish hath taken place.

ON A TALL BRUNETTE.

Ercct and dusky is the maid,
  And like a limber lance she stands;
My heart before her feet is laid,
  My leading-strings are in her hands.
Now Mentor must find fault and preach:—
  "Her figure's far too long," he says;
But such a mean and jealous speech
  His petty spite at once betrays.

"Now this," said I, "is good to hear,"
  "No better news could ever be,
"For length of life is always dear,
  "And she is life itself to me."
In one way, true, he may be right:
  She's long compelled me to complain
Of many a long and sleepless night,
  And many a long and weary pain.

But as for stature, I declare
  That that is not a fault at all:
The first of beauties in the fair
  Is that she should be straight and tall.
The highest forts, I've often seen,
  A safeguard to their owners prove.
She is a noble fort, I ween,
  Will prove a safeguard to my love.

PROCRASTINATION.

P. 61.

The promise has been long deferred,
And gentlemen should keep their word.
You promised me for Thursday last,
But Thursday's gone, and Sunday's past.
And when I importune, you say,
"I will, by heaven, another day!"
The days as they go by I count,
And grumble at the large amount.
You've told the notary, so you say;—
Well! have they driven him away?
If on the notary I based
My trust—'twere confidence misplaced.

ON RECEIVING A NOSEGAY AND A COPY OF VERSES.

May you each succeeding day
  Ever number happier hours!
I have just received the tray,
  Filled with bright and fragrant flowers.
But if I the truth must speak,
  The rose for which alone I care
Blooms upon the blushing cheek
  Of a maiden young and fair.

And the poem which you wrote,—
  Worth an ode is every line,—
Not the sweetest songster's note
  Could have made it more divine.
You are sure of praise and fame
  When you thus break forth in song:
For we know that to your name
  Praise and fame by right belong[1].

[1] His name was 'Abd el Ḥamíd, "Servant of the Praised One."

Whether you may stand or sit, P. 62.
  Whatsoe'er be your employ,
God so bless and order it,
  That it bring my master joy.
Wishing thee all happiness,
  For thy better health I pray;
May it, like a brand new dress,
  Be renewed from day to day.

SONNET.

[On a girl named *Malúk*[1].]

My life be ransom for the constant maid,
  Who doth redeem her promise, and renew
Love's covenant which heretofore she made:
Who on my neck such load of favours laid,
  I could not pay the thanks that were her due.
  I ran to meet her, and I scarcely knew
What were those pearls, her white teeth or her chain,
  That as I kissed her met my raptured view.
To kiss her dainty feet I was full fain:
  But she refusing shunned the cold embrace,
  And in their stead outstretched a willing face.
So fair she is, no other could attain
  To such a pitch of beauty or of grace.
  Her lovely lineaments no tongue could trace;
However eloquent, 'twould strive in vain.
  She is the "Quean" who ruleth in my breast,
  I am "her slave," and would be so addressed.

[1] "Malúk" being similar in sound to *mulúk* "Kings," the Poet puns on the two words.

EPIGRAM.

[On an ill-tempered friend.]

I have a friend, a man so bad
  He never got a good word yet.
If any worth indeed he had,
  I'd sell him for what I could get.

His temper is so bad and rough,
  It much resembles in my eyes
The piece of road whose pathway tough
  'Twixt Amed and Suweidá lies.

DEVOTION.

P. 63.

Dearest in the world to me,
  Wherefore doth thy promise fail?
I will grieve at losing thee,
  Haply grief may yet avail.

Thou could'st never bear the sight,
  Didst thou see me, with my face
Bathed in tears the livelong night,
  Lonely and in wretched case.

Oh! that thou wert only nigh!
  Or that I were nigh to thee!
Be my friend. For nought I sigh,
  But that thou should'st friendly be.

Where amongst all other men
  Doth a love like mine abide?
When I loved, I spoiled thee then
  For the love of all beside.

Lo! thy faithful slave am I;
  Ah! what service do I pay!
For thee I hold it life to die,
  And righteousness to go astray.

TO AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

My soul be ransom for the timid maid!
She came to meet me, though she shook with fear
Like the young sapling quivering in the glade.
By stealth she came, when all the camp were laid
In their first slumber; when no watch was kept,
When spiteful talebearers and listeners slept,
And there was no one who might overhear.
Never till now have I beheld a moon
(For such is she) that trembled with affright—
Deems she the stars are envious of her light?
I used to fancy that her face was fair, P. 64.
But Beauty's self hath made its dwelling there.
May I be ransom for the friend whose love
I needed but this interview to prove.
He needed not that I should importune
By frequent letters; nor from day to day
Did promises our interview delay;
He saw me ailing for great love of her,
And sought the sad sick chamber where I lay;
Such kindly thoughts his loving bosom stir.
Thou, envious rival, perish in thy spite,
For I am he whose love doth him requite.—
One friend have I; amongst all mortals none
Have I beside; yet is he more to me
Than all the world, although I say "but one."
Dear friend of mine! ne'er may we parted be,
But always find a place wherein to meet.
Thou who hast come so unexpectedly,
Thy coming thus with gratitude I greet.

TO AN INCONSTANT FRIEND.

Traitor! was no plighted troth
Ever given between us both?
Now though I have proved my case,
Why persist you are not base?
You swear you did not break our pact,
But witnesses can prove the fact.
Thou[1]! who dost thy friends exchange,
I give thee great joy of the change.
If haughty coolness pleases thee,
Why haughty coolness pleases me!
Know that I care nought for thee,
If thou carest nought for me!
P. 65.
Friends will ever find me near;
Distant only when they veer.
When my heart disowns thy sway,
I will keep a holiday.
Thou wilt seek me as before,
But I shall return no more.
Now perchance thou mayest prove
I am obdurate in love.

BETRAYED.

Alas! and shall I never gain an access, but for ever
Thus bootlessly endeavour jealous guardians to deceive?
Is there no one who will guide me, no one who will stand beside me,
Or with ready help provide me, and my misery relieve?

[1] The change of number occurs in the original; it is not unusual in Arabic, and is found in many passages of the Ḳorân.

Ah! did one whom I could mention only favour my pretension,
  I should pay but scant attention to the hate of any foe.
But if thou, my soul! forsakest, and void of pity breakest
  Every promise that thou makest, unto whom else can I go?

My heart so strongly yearneth, no fire more fiercely burneth,
  And sleep no more returneth to my eyelids in the night.
For God hath so designed me, that passion still should blind
    me,
  And that promises should bind me when my faith and love
    I plight.

By the springs of love I wander, o'er the mystic waters ponder,
  And a precious lifetime squander midst the crowds that thither
    run.
But to one alone I cleave me; may the world for ever leave me,
  If my fate should once bereave me of that only cherished one!

Ye friends who gathered round us! where are now the joys that
    crowned us,
  And the promises that bound us in the happy days of yore?
In you have I delighted, you alone with love requited;
  For you alone have slighted 'Amer, Zeid[1], and many more.

Oh! look not as a scoffer on the tears which now I offer;
  They are wares which when I proffer are not difficult to sell;
For thousands fain would try them; many customers would buy
    them; P. 66.
  And, did I but supply them, would agree to pay me well.

Some people have pretended that my fame is far extended,
  That my praise has even wended to and fro throughout the
    land;
If I be so celebrated a poet as is stated,
  Wherefore have I vainly waited for my laurels at your hand?

[1] 'Amer and Zeid are the John Doe and Richard Roe, the Lycidas and Corydon of Arabic literature.

You were once the help I counted on in griefs to be surmounted;
  My store which had amounted to a competence or more;
I hoped that you would aid me, but—alas! ye have betrayed me.
  Ye, my sword, my right hand, made me still more powerless than before.

Thus have ye said and acted; ye have dallied and protracted,
  Coquetted and exacted; but I will not fume or fret.
The love which I accorded with hate ye have rewarded;
  With coolness proud and sordid my advances have ye met.

If thus, without occasion, you could act to a relation,
  Who in family and station is, or should be, near and dear,—
What, when fate shall have bereft you of friends,—however deft you
  Be—what treatment is there left you for the strangers that appear?

EPIGRAM.

God keep you from the harm and spite
  Of every rascal low and mean.
How many a proud and noble wight
  Tormented by a churl has been!

Does not the lordly lion feel
  Tormented by an insect vile?
And are not swords of Indian steel
  Diminished by a common file?

RECONCILIATION.

[In the metre of the original.

⏑ – ⏓ ⏑ – ⏓ – ⏑ – ⏓ ⏑ – ⏑ –]

May God pardon thee this sin, oh! where is thy love I pray,
And where is the kindly heart thou didst heretofore display?
By what was between us twain, oh! break not the pact we made,
That eaves-dropping folk should hear, and mentors should have their say.
Alas! thou who wert my friend, for why dost thou treat me thus? P. 67.
When I try—the Lord be praised!—to walk in the righteous way.
Oh! come let us lay aside disputes and be reconciled,
Return once again;—"Return is good," so the proverbs say.
Oh! mar not with sharp reproof the face of a love like ours,
Whereon beauty's radiance falls and shines with a brilliant ray.
We cannot endure to be beholden to messengers,
Nor shall any written page the tale of our love betray.
Whene'er we dispute and chide, returning to love again,
It is only love renewed between us from day to day.
I hear thee reproach, and make excuses for what I have done,
We argue, and mutual love is strengthened by all we say.
I hear thee reproach, and yet I know not—so sweet thy tones—
If it be reproach or love that such gentle words convey.
I know that reproach proceeds but from jealous love of me,
And sweet is reproach that testifieth to love alway.
But last night we seemed two friends, and talked to our hearts' content,
And scattered bright pearls of speech around in a rich array.
The breeze of the mead has borne the words of our speech abroad,
And God grant no spiteful ears should hear what we had to say.

AN INVITATION.

Master! thou dost keep away,
  Yet my heart is with thee still.
Master! speak to me, and say
  When thou wilt thy word fulfil.

Will thy troth remembered be,
  E'en as I remember mine?
Wilt thou cherish love for me,
  Even as I cherish thine?

P. 68. Let us visit as before;
  If it please thee, come to me:
Or, if it should please thee more,
  I will come at once to thee.

I am all alone today,
  In the house I sit and wait,
Come then all alone, I pray,
  And enjoy a *tête à tête*.

AN APPEAL.

Master! be thou all mine own,
E'en as I am thine alone.
Let thy heart be near to me,
E'en as mine is near to thee.
Fair is my intent to thee;
So may thine successful be.
Wish not that we two may part,
For 'tis farthest from my heart.
Though thou shouldst our troth forget,
I have not forgotten yet.
Thou dost trifle with my love,
Which will ever constant prove.

No indulgence do I crave,
Punish as thou wilt thy slave.
If I am of thee bereft,
Nought but sorrow have I left.

THE BORE.

That fellow puts all joy to flight;
His talk is like a winter's night,
Long, cold, and void of all delight.

IN MEMORIAM.

In the deep grave low lies thy head, P. 69.
And I to vain desire survive.
Thou diest; I am still alive;
Would thou didst live and I were dead!

THE STOIC.

You ask what recent ills I have;
Well, neither more nor less of pain.
But if I sank into my grave,
You know I never should complain.

TO A CONVALESCENT.

You are in good case to day;
But then you are good alway.
I have come to pay a call,
Not on a sick man at all.
This is the happiest of days,
And for the fact the Lord I praise.
May your wishes be supplied,
Every one and more beside.

TO A YOUTH.

P. 70. Good heavens! why that youthful face
Is covered o'er with whiskers black!
And gone is all that childish grace,
That used to take us so aback.
Your past attractions we deplore,
But joy at what you have in store.

PROTESTATIONS.

My love is strong, as well you know,
Nay, stronger; and this being so,
Pray why do you a love deny
To which your heart can testify?

A CURSE.

My curse on Ṣá'id for a bore,
On all his ancestors of yore,
His sons and grandsons evermore.

BAD POLICY.

Oh! doughty champion, at whose sight
The foemen take at once to flight,
Unto a fleeting thing you run
For succour, and it offers none.
You seek the whole, attain it not,
And lose the little that you've got.

LOVE AND WINE.

I.

Thy Zeid fulfils not his desire of love; P. 71.
No love-dawn cometh to fulfil his night.
Thou turnest all hearts by thy beauty's might,
Save from thy love; from this they will not move.
Thou robbest all men's eyes of their delight,
Save the delight of gazing upon thee.
Thou art to me a lover's fallacy
And undefined, that was so definite.
Thy night is passed in comfort and repose;
Thou carest nought for those who lie awake.
Grafted upon thy love my firm faith grows:
But from the branches no sweet fruit I take.
Nought have I gained, except that spiteful foes
The long and short of our affairs disclose.

II.

Oh God, for such another happy night
As that we passed, when there was no one by
With stealthy footstep or with prying eye
To mar our joy and harmony. So bright
Its clear, uninterrupted flood of light,
That not a trace of darkness lingered there,
Save in my love's dark eyes and jetty hair.
Then was our joy unleavened with affright;
While the rich perfume of the flowers and wine
In mingled sweetness was diffused around.
Sleep stole not o'er me, from these eyes of mine
Veiling such beauties; till I turned and found
The starry eyes that did above me shine,
Themselves were drooping to a dim decline.

III.

E'en as I drank, the glorious liquor shone
  Like a bright sun within the cup; its beams
  Diffused around, as when above us gleams
The grand effulgence of the rising sun.
So bright and sparkling, that, when day is done,
  And darkness spreadeth over earth and sky,
  'Twould light the room, until the purblind eye
Might read the legends that round *dînars*[1] run.
A virgin drink, which, should a man demand,
  His fortune would repent each former freak;
P. 72. Lo as I drink it from my maiden's hand,
  It seems expressed from her bright eye and cheek!
Firm in her purpose doth that maiden stand
  To slay her lover, though she seem so weak.
The goblet glitters in the rays that shine
From her bright forehead, and the joyous wine
  Breathes from her lips its perfume rich and rare;
And oh! our converse on that night divine
  Would shame the meadows, though they be so fair.

BEAUTY'S GARDEN.

Oh, "Beauty's Garden"! come to me,
  There's nought to frown or lower at;
For where would you a garden see,
  Without its little "floweret[2]"?

[1] *dinar*, a gold coin.
[2] The signification of the poet's name *Zoheir* is "a little flower."

MISPLACED CONFIDENCE.

A friend of mine I've treated like a lord,
  I've let him pry into my inmost soul,
And know my secrets; then, upon my word,
  Like fire in incense, he betrays the whole.

My closest friendship I have let him share,
  But he has shown no sympathy; alack!
I've put him forward, but his only care
  Has been, whene'er he could, to keep me back.

In thus adopting one so base and bad,
  'Tis only loss, not profit, I've incurred;
As in diminutives grammarians add
  Another letter to reduce the word[1]!

THE YOUTHFUL LOVER.

She blames me for my love and truth, P. 73.
  And hints that I should turn my mind
From idle thoughts of careless youth,
  And in religion solace find.

She sees my grey locks—for my part
  I feel that I am still but young!—
She pities my poor captive heart,
  That Love has into fetters flung.

"Alas! and dare you still engage
  In love, my poor Zoheir?" quoth she,
"'Twould more become your hoary age
  To live in sober chastity."

"Let me," said I, "my time employ
  In love and pleasure, while I may,
The season of such perfect joy
  Will not, alas! endure for aye.

[1] In Arabic the diminutive is formed by inserting the letter *ya*: as رجل *rajul* "a man," رجيل *rujail* "a little man."

Still let me revel in delight,
  For youth is ever free and wild;
And if folks say it is not right,
  Then tell them I am but a child.

Now is the time for sport and play,
  For still my branch is fresh and bright;
Now graceful forms my senses sway,
  Bright eyes and lips my heart delight.

And if that I of love should die,
  Mine is not the first instance known:
For many in their cold graves lie,
  Whom Love ere this hath overthrown.

But though with love and youth elate,
  I keep the noblest aims in view;
For though I be intoxicate
  With love, I am ambitious too.

And though of subtle speech and wit,
  I stoop to nothing base or ill;
Though young in years, what matter it?
  In virtue I'm an elder still!"

A TRIUMPHAL ODE.

P. 74. [Addressed to the Illustrious Emír Nasír ed dín íbn el Lamṭí, congratulating him on his return from 'Aidáb, where he had encountered el Ḥadrabí, chief of the Bejá Arabs, and the latter had retreated, leaving behind him all the property and camels which he possessed; all which spoil the Emír seized and brought into the town of Ḳoṣ.]

She granted me an interview, and came
  Attended by her escort, Modesty.
Why, when it brings her neither harm nor blame,
  Should she so chary of her favours be?

Say, will she never soothe her love-sick swain?
  Or will she never set her captive free?
I watch the night-stars as they rise or wane,
  Because it is my loved one's wont to wear
Such jewels in a necklace or a chain.
  Phantoms, they say, impalpable as air,
Visit the sleeper 'neath the moon's pale beam;
  Where shall my eyelid borrow slumber—where?
For like unto a phantom do I seem
  Through love of her. Perchance in sleep by night
I may steal to her as a shadowy dream.
  I envy the cool gales, that in their flight
Pass o'er the young branch of the willow-tree:
  For that young branch is like her in my sight.
How can she hinder that two things should be
  Closely associated in the mind
Of us who strive to gain her sympathy?—
  To wit: her castles and the checks we find.
She is not one of those fair dames who raise
  A beacon fire, with the intention kind
Of lighting lovers from their devious ways;
  Alas! the fires she kindleth but too well
Within the bosom of her lover blaze.
  She is not like the Arab folk who dwell
In desert plains, except upon one ground:
  Her coyness is as that of a gazelle!
I seek her dwelling, but her faithful hound
  Barks not upon me; and, alas! no more
Her camels greet me with their lowing sound.
  Did Laila, famed in the romance of yore,
Possess the dust whereon dwells my beloved,
  'Twere fairer far than all the gems she wore.
So hard a creditor hath Passion proved,
  My soul is spent!—but little now remains;
Yet what the hand of Love hath not removed,
  I give as guerdon for the herald's pains

Who brings the tidings of NASÍR'S advance.
P. 75. One so illustrious, that whene'er he deigns
To shew the splendour of his countenance,
Thou'lt say to Night, "Now in yon gleaming sky
Thy moon lacks lustre." Should it be thy chance
To kiss his hand, thou mayest there descry
The exhaustless lake from whose wide waters flow
The streams of human generosity.
How many a man lays claim to glory;—lo!
He ruleth over its entire domain.
Thou comest hither, and the land doth go
Forth to receive and welcome thee again,
As though its soul had burst out into song
To greet thee, and its inmost joy explain.
The land doth meet thee; as thou comest along
Its flowery meadows trail their festal dress;
Its pools laugh merrily; its flowerets throng
Smiling to greet thee; and its bright lights press
Beaming to meet thee. Nay, those slaves of thine,
The rain-clouds, welcome thee with rich largess.
And many a prayer, when thy bright beams divine
Temper the darkness that had reigned before,
Speeds o'er the plain to bless thy grace benign.
Thy steed hath trodden an untrodden shore;
No horseman else hath passed that rugged way,
Whose rocks would make the eagles' talons sore,
Where the sure Ḳaṭa[1] needs must go astray.
On foreign soil thine Arab's hoof is set,
Where on the bare crags sit the birds of prey.
Princes, or lions, ere their ranks have met
With thine in battle to defend their land,
Thy foemen sound the bugle of retreat.
Though by the awful prowess of thy hand,
Man, the domesticated, falls and dies,

[1] The Ḳaṭa is a kind of grouse proverbial for the unerring accuracy with which it makes for water.

Wild beasts and vultures batten on the strand.
Quickly throughout the world the rumour flies
Of thy late conflict; what things thou hast wrought
Amongst the armies of thine enemies.
How they took flight in great fear who had sought
To injure Islam; o'er the barren heath
The heathen wandered straitened and distraught;
Their chief, El Ḥadhrabí, with bated breath,
Turned back through terror of thy fire, and fled P. 76.
To that his soul must meet with after death;
On either side he, shivering, turned his head,
In every milestone, and in every bird,
Seeing some object to avoid and dread.
And thou didst seize whate'er thy soul preferred;
Even his wives and dear ones were thy prey.
If one, half dead, escaped, he is deferred
For burning torments on the judgment day.
But 'twas not merely to chastise the foe
Thine army marched, but to prepare the way
For honest pilgrims who to Mecca go.
And one is left in the command, renowned
For steady purpose, who with one swift blow
Dispelled the foeman—Mejd ed dín[1], who found
All obstacles that barred his pathway fly;
A watchful sentry, for no sleep profound
While at his post surprised his wakeful eye;
His perfect faculties no wavering harmed;
His country resteth in security;
Her foes alarmèd, and her forts all armed.
By rich men's riches, and by poor men's prayers,
'Gainst all reverses in his whole life charmed.
My branch of hope at length a rich fruit bears,
Thanks to thy genial presence! and the earth
At length a fresher, brighter aspect wears.

[1] Apparently the brother of the subject of this ode, and himself the subject of the panegyric on p. 90.

For me no single blessing e'er had birth
In God's good grace, but I have found in thee
Its kind dispenser; he who gives to worth
Its first reward, however great it be,
May we not hope he will the same complete?
But if thy gifts have been both great and free,
I pay such thanks and homage as is meet.
My poor rhymes halted whilst thou wert away,
Now they come smiling to thine honour's feet.
They veiled their beauties for full many a day
While thou wert absent, waxing dim and pale.
Now I can scarcely bear their dawning ray:
For none but thee have they removed their veil.
P. 77. Did desert Arabs this Ḳasídah[1] hear—
Those keenest critics of a song or tale—
E'en great Ferazdaḳ, or renowned Jerír,
Must needs give up the contest in despair.
Accept it therefore; for thou dost appear
To love all good things;—'tis a maiden fair,
Decked out to please her destined husband's sight,
Who doth her richest silks and jewels wear!
Its very lines with pleasure would grow white,
Should it beneath thy approbation fall.
Many may be the odes that poets write,
Mine to the prince is still the prince of all!

A PANEGYRIC.

[On the Emir Mejd ed dín Moḥammed ibn Isma'íl.]

Dost thou know that the Zephyrs, as onward they stray,
Have carried our tale to the watchful one's ear;
And have published the secret I dared not betray,
And the love that I never dared utter for fear?

[1] An Ode.

For an exquisite odour was wafted along,
  That freshened and perfumed his robe as it passed,
And he knew 'twas the breath of my amorous song,
  That was borne on the wings of the sweet-smelling blast.

Then my Mentor came chiding with solemn reproof,
  But I stopped up my ears to the words that he spoke,
With a love that not only keeps Mentor aloof,
  But whole armies of any such troublesome folk.

Ah! he knows not that thinking on thee through the night
  More sweet than the peacefullest slumber can prove.
He blames me; for that I will owe him no spite,
  For alas! he knows nothing, poor fellow, of love!

My heart for the maid with the somnolent spell—
  Not the slumber of sleep, for that cometh not nigh;—
Have you never yet gazed on a timid gazelle,
  Brown bodied and languid and lustrous of eye?

Her beauties have laid all our intellects low,
  Till admiring expressions are all that one hears,—
"Glory be to the Maker who fashioned her so!"
  Or, "God is the greatest!"—whene'er she appears.

I fondled the fruit-laden branch of her neck,
  And I kissed the bright beaming full moon of her cheek.
And the joy of my love no discretion could check, P. 78.
  Till I feared 'twould my long hidden passion bespeak.

Yes, I cherished that passion and hid the sad truth
  Till this song hath diffused it like perfume around.
Though I follow the dictates of passion and youth,
  Yet in praising my prince an excuse have I found.

Now, since I have met him, I pardon my fate,
  Nay, I thank it,—my thanks are most due to its worth!
'Twixt my Lord and all others the distance is great
  As the distance dividing the stars from the earth.

The Angels of heaven in faith he transcends,—
Great God! what a pure and clear conscience is there!
His ambition o'er Saturn's high station extends,
And to reach it the Star of all Light would despair.

Bounty glories in him for his dignity's sake!
His lance it is limber, high-tempered his brand.
A Ḥátim whene'er your petitions ye make,
An 'Antar when 'gainst him in battle ye stand.

In its dignity quivers his Indian sword,
In its haughtiness swayeth his Samhari spear;
If one beg for his gifts, 'tis as though at his word
Clouds laden with full showers of bounty appear.

To Honour and Virtue his lineage we trace,
Wherefore Honour him only of mortals doth love.
He comes of a noble, munificent race,
Whose home was the vast heights of Honour above.

Created in Islam's religion were they,
But to war-fires and feast-fires their worship they paid;
On their good steeds they rode through the thick of the fray,
As lions bound fiercely in Shera's deep glade.

Steeds that answered the reins, firm and sturdy of limb,
The "blaze" on whose fronts made the darkness grow bright;
P. 79. As they rode through the night the clear stars would grow dim,
And would pale in the rays of their cavalcade's light.

Rejoice in the glory that Heaven bestows,
Thy glory for all future ages shall be;
And Islam shall cherish thy name, for she knows
That her help and her succour are ever in thee.

Let Ṣaïd and the people that in it do dwell,
Rejoice in thy coming; what herald shall bring
The glad tidings to Mecca the Holy, and tell
The Mother of Towns what she owes to her king?

When thine eye shall behold it, so fair it will seem,
  Thou wilt fancy thou seest a heaven on earth;
Nought is wanting therein but a Kauthar's pure stream,
  And to that will the streams of thy bounty give birth.

Souls have yearned for thy presence full oft, till at last
  Their long yearning hath sundered them almost in twain.
As for me, I have vowed these fair jewels to cast
  O'er the neck of the age if I saw thee again.

And I vowed I would fill a fair censer with praise,
  And kindle as incense within it a lay
That should lay in subjection all other bards' lays,
  And barter men's senses for ever and aye.

And to honour the minstrel who sings them, they'll place
  Two cushions, and he shall sit first in the throng.—
Oh, my Lord Mejd ed dín! I would sue for thy grace,
  For my love is above all suspicion of wrong.

Methinks I know all men if thou art but nigh;
  And methinks I know no one if thou art estranged.
Thy nature was free as the rain clouds, and I
  Should be sorry that any should say it has changed.

'Tis not want of affection that keeps me from thee,
  God forbid such a lying calumnious tale!
May I fail in my duty to God if I be
  One in duty, or thanks for thy bounties, to fail!

A PANEGYRIC

P. 80. On the Sultán el Melik el Kámil Náṣir ed dín Abu 'l-fatḥ Moḥammed son of El Melik el 'Adil Abu Bekr ibn Aiyúb, in which the poet celebrates the additional fortification of Damietta.

Our holy Faith exulteth still in thee,
With Victory's robes endued;
The miscreant bands of Infidelity
Are driven back subdued.
Thy bounties,—unto Allah be the praise,—
All praise and thanks exceed;
When not e'en life itself thy gifts repays,
Vows are too scant a meed.
Let him, who will, begin to tell the tale,
Here is there fullest scope;
Thy theme is eloquent, and should'st thou fail,
For no indulgence hope.
A King, who if he punish or reward,
Whiche'er his pleasure is,
Where wilt thou find another such award
Of gifts or pains as his?
Thro' him the seasons walk with joyous mien,
In youthful vigour clad,
And trail their festive robes of fertile green,
Exuberant and glad.
His gifts are brilliant as the bright, white hand,
That Moses held on high;
And yet they walk like Khiẓer thro' the land
On feet that never die.
And 'tis for his sake that Moḳattem's Hill
Doth unto Heaven tower,
Striving with Sinai's holy mountain still,
In rivalry of power.

Legions of monarchs bow beneath his sway,
And do his high behests;
Aye, e'en the very Firmaments obey
His mandates and requests.
King, who in rank dost with the Angels vie,
Whose glory and whose fame
Have reached so far that e'en the hosts on high
Do honour to thy name!
Thee do we humbly now congratulate
For what thy Lord hath given,
For deeds that shall be looked upon as great,
When deeds are weighed in Heaven.
Egypt rejoiceth, but not she alone, P. 81.
Baghdad rejoiceth more;
For had her king less pious ardour shewn,
She that was heretofore
The "Abode of Peace" had suffered War's alarm;
Nay, but for Kámil's aid,
I swear that Moslems would have dreaded harm
E'en in the Kaába's shade.
Who shall these tidings unto Mecca bear?
To Yathrib[1] let him turn,
And tell the One who lieth buried there;
So shall the Prophet learn
That he who bears his own reveréd name,
A prince Moḥammed hight,
In Islam's front hath guarded her fair fame
From fickle Fortune's spite.
El Kámil he! a monarch of such worth,
That, didst thou name his name,
The Age would hail it with delight! the Earth
Hail it with glad acclaim!
Damietta wreaks her vengeance on the horde
Of foes who filled her strand,

[1] El Medina.

Lo! he hath cleansed her city with his sword,
And with his holy band.
Prayers, to Damietta's altars long unknown,
Hath he restored again.
Ah, how long, yearning for the hallowed tone,
Had they in silence lain!
The Benu Aṣfar[1] with the yellow hair,
If e'er they sleep, meseems
Nought but thy yellow standards flaunting there
Will haunt them in their dreams.
I marvel greatly at the neighbouring sea,
Whereon their fleet did ride;
Do we not even here among us see
The monarch of the tide?
Is not this action of the treacherous wave
A crime, one that demands
That it should come in humble guise to crave
For pardon at thy hands?
Three years and months thou tarriedst to fight,
And holy war didst wage
In thine own person, nor didst thou some wight
As substitute engage.
And thou didst wait with patience nights and days,
Till God sent Victory;
Wherefore the end of patience didst thou praise,
That brought success to thee.
That "night of rude Dispersion" the foe
Resembled in their eyes,
From the vast multitude thine arms laid low,
The "night of Sacrifice."
And such a great and wondrous power there came
In that dread midnight hour,
That 'tis no wonder if such night I name
A second "night of Power."

[1] "Sons of the Yellow one," the Franks.

The foeman's path also was barred by thee, P. 87.
By land and eke by main,
With dark-hulled vessels skimming o'er the sea,—
Bright horses o'er the plain!
A fleet like thine ne'er lived in history yet;
Thy ships so fleet are they,
That swifter darteth every trim *corvette*
Than hawks upon their prey.
Thine army too resembled murky night,
Inspiring awe and dread,
Although illumined by the starry light
Its brilliant heroes shed.
Thy good steeds, never was their equal seen
With the Benú Zoheir,
Nor with the noble Arab tribe, I ween,
Who called el Bedr sire.
God's chosen warriors rode on that night
On many a slender steed,
Whose foreheads blazed until of other light
The squadron had no need.
Nor didst thou halt till God gave aid and grace
Unto his chosen crew;
Until with joyous victory the face
Of earth all radiant grew.
Thou didst appease with foemen's life-blood spilled
The thirsty sword and lance;
The hungry wolf and vulture too were filled,
Where'er thou didst advance.
The kings of Rúm came also unto thee,
Abashed by fear and shame,
Trailing the garment of humility
Behind them as they came:
Came to a King; above the clouds on high
His lofty rank extends;
Nay more, upon his liberality
The cloud itself depends!

And thou didst grant them quarter of thy grace,
In spite of sword and spear!
God save Damietta, Islam's *front and face,*
From every cause of fear!
Nor would the waters of our mighty Nile
Be half so pure and sweet,
But that where Damietta's *mouth*[1] doth smile
Their streams with Ocean meet!
God! what a day of victory was there
When in thy legions pressed,
And when thy standards, flying through the air,
Regained their long-lost nest!
No day of victory famed in ancient lays
Could rival this of thine;
'Twill well nigh make mankind forget the days
Of Bedr and Ḥonein[2]!
Happy were they to whom by prosperous fate
A part therein was given;
For in the plunder they participate,
And in reward from Heaven!
P. 83. And I for every fresh arrival pine,
If he has aught to tell
Of these great tidings—not the choicest wine
Could gladden me as well.
And then I beg him to repeat in full
The story in mine ear,
As though my sense of hearing had grown dull—
Yet is my hearing clear.
Like sweet cool water it would serve to slake
The thirst; and those who ride
O'er arid desert plains would need to take
No provender beside.

[1] The word ثغر means both "a fortress" and a "row of teeth." It is impossible to preserve the pun in the translation.

[2] Two of Mohammed's great victories (see notes to the Arabic text).

A day scarce passes, since the joyful tale
Was told at first to me,
But that I con it over to regale
My ear and memory.
But ever since, up to the present day,
Although full well I knew
The thing had happened, I can hardly say
That I believed it true.
My liege, may Heaven prosper thee! for he
Who sings thy praises now
Owes precious life and liberty to thee.
Nay, but thy worth, I vow,
Transcends all praises that a bard can sing,
Howe'er his lyre he tune;
Aye, even though to deck his verse he bring
The glorious sun and moon!

A CONGRATULATORY ODE

Addressed to the son of the last-mentioned monarch, El Melik el Mes'úd, Ṣaláh ed dín, Abu 'l Muzaffar, Yúsuf ibn el Melik el Kámil, on his return from Yemen. Sent by the author from Ḳoṣ to Cairo in the year 621 A.H. = 1224 A.D.

Fair Egypt fondly turneth unto thee,
(To those who love her well she ever turneth;)
And Praise, accompanying Victory,
Hasteneth to thee, and for thy presence yearneth.

To thee, a generous but unwavering King,
The loyal land now payeth its devotion;
A King,—herein behold a wondrous thing—
Stable as Land, and yet as free as Ocean!

For el Mesúd, the brave and good, they yearn,
Whose sward is verdant, and whose sword is ruddy!
Gentle to suppliants, to foemen stern,—
Great Heaven, that one should be both mild and bloody!

Preserving fair Religion from her foes,
Not sport in well-stocked game preserves, his bliss is;
In courting dangers and exchanging blows,
Not courting maidens and exchanging kisses!

P. 84. Whene'er we burst forth in triumphal song,
His virtues manifold in poetry shewing,
The dunce exclaims, "Did such a theme belong
"To me, 't would make my language fine and flowing!"

The children of Aiyúb around his throne,
A noble and illustrious band, are clustered;
Islám is saved and Misbelief o'erthrown
Whene'er such princes and Emírs are mustered.

From every pulpit doth their name resound,
And every coin their style and title beareth;
And, lo! among them is el Kámil found,
The pride and boast of those whose rank he shareth.

King, whose renown is spread throughout the earth,
Whom every one or hopeth in or feareth,
Before thy grace fades Fadhl and Jáfer's worth,
And Fena-Khosrú's glory disappeareth!

The Kings of old beside thee are as nought,
Their power and glories unremembered slumber.
Full many an act of goodness hast thou wrought,
And this to Mecca's shrine amongst the number.

Who plants the tree of kindness reaps its fruit,—
Renown in this world, in the next world glory.
What joys doth Egypt to thine arms impute!
Who will relate to Baghdad Egypt's story?

El Ḳaṣr exults when thou alightest there;
Its face at thy approach with joy is beaming.
Mo'ezz's might could ne'er with thine compare;—
Who thinks of day-break when the sun is gleaming?

Our capital has gained its wish at last,
  Since thou returnest once again unto it.
How many another town, where thou hast passed,
  Has seen a stream of bounty cleaving through it!

'Tis thy munificence that clears away
  Its long-felt drought, not rain-drops falling lightly;
'Tis thy bright face that makes its darkness day,
  Not yonder moon that shines in Heaven so brightly!

The breeze that bloweth over Egypt's land
  With such sweet aromatic scents is laden,
Because it comes from far off India's strand
  To visit thee, from Oman and from Aden.

How many a lofty fortress on those coasts P. 85.
  Hast thou reduced and taken by thy labours;
Scant help against thee gave the starry hosts,
  To whom their eyrie-site had made them neighbours.

They towered aloft on every mountain-top,
  Until the very rain-clouds sailed below them;
Nor could they have enjoyed a single drop,
  But for the showers of bounty thou didst shew them.

Had Ṣenâʿ known that thou wert passing by,
  A lasting joy within her gates had tarried.
A race is ruined if thou art not nigh,
  A place without thee is a desert arid.

Stay, trusty comrade, for the love I bear,
  So shall thy guerdon and my thanks be given:
Convey this greeting like a garden fair,
  Wherein the flowers are bright as stars in heaven!

Bear it to Cairo and its Castle wall—
  Oh glorious Cairo! and oh Castle famous!
In adoration on its threshold fall
  And pay my service—for 'twill never shame us—

Unto a King, large-hearted, lord of might,
The World his court and Time one of its members!
Amongst earth's kings will I a censer light,—
His praise for incense and my wits for embers.

May'st thou Ṣaláḥ ed dín "Faith's Saviour[1]" prove;
May Piety and Victory attend thee!
Accept *in toto* all my praise and love,
The details, sire, are more than I can send thee;

Though I, the poet of the century, sing,
Whose song puts other poets to confusion,
Thou wouldst make eloquent a speechless thing—
Glory to Thee, oh Lord of great profusion!

P. 86.

A LETTER

Addressed to the accomplished Vizier Fakhr ed dín, Abu 'l fatḥ, 'Abdallah son of the Cádhí of Dáraiyá, thanking him for some kindness which he had shewn the poet.

Which shall I mention of your favours all?
Which of your presents shall I now recall?
For, strange to say, of bounties I complain,
Which even in thanks I can't pay back again!
The rain before them reineth in its drops,
It cannot count them—that is why it stops.
You leave me with your bounty brimming o'er,
My Hope's fresh branches yielding golden store.
Such rich and generous gifts you have bestowed,
My shoulders fail beneath their heavy load.
I'll thank you for them while I live, and then
I'll rise and thank you if I rise again!
Although to me such fluency belongs,—
Although I wield with ease these varied songs,—

[1] This is the signification of the name Ṣaláḥ ed dín.

Your merits lie beyond my praise's reach,
Fuller and ampler than my ablest speech.
Yet, when my gratitude I thus declare,
My language charms you like a gay parterre;
So sweet, that musk is forced to give it room,
The breeze is scented with its rich perfume!
Accept it then, the daughter of an hour,—
To deck her comelier was beyond my power,—
Who shrinking bashfully with sweet affright,
Totters into her destined husband's sight.

RECONCILIATION.

P. 87.

Come, let's forget we've been estranged,
  Nor let the tell-tales know it.
Come, let's be friends, and, if we've changed,
  Act so as not to shew it.

Oh! speak no more of what's gone by,
  There was no fault in either;
We blamed each other, you and I,
  Pray God may punish neither.

At length our long-protracted strife
  Has reached its utmost tether:
To clear the troubled stream of life
  Let's meet once more together.

Your former kindness to repay,
  Late slights I'll take no heed of,
Our love's new dated from to-day,
  And by-gones we've no need of.

We've passed full many a pleasant night,
  All thought of sleep allaying
With converse sweet as souls' delight
  Or soft spring breezes playing.

ESTRANGEMENT.

For God's sake tell me where you've been,
'Tis three days since your face I've seen.
So dear as you were wont to be,
What keeps you now so far from me?
Mine eye, expecting you for aye,
Lingering looks along the way.
P. 83. Ah! you forget our compact now,
Who used to keep your every vow!
Your friends, it's clear, you never miss,
If you can turn away like this!
Since you have left, between mine eyes
And slumber constant feuds arise.
You were my sole delight; then why
Forbid your form to greet mine eye?
You've carried off my traitorous heart
That always used to take your part.
How is it you are thus estranged,
And who has thus your nature changed?
And why torment me, and refuse
To send me e'en the slightest news?
So ardent are my passion's flames,
My heart excuses while it blames!
'Tis strange that lovers who complain
Should thank the loved ones for their pain!
By Heaven, I am not false in love,
And that I'll undertake to prove!
You who have stolen my heart away,
Have you not yet done with it, pray?
The patience that erewhile I knew
Is now no more;—long life to you!
Now, by those eyes so bright and fair,
Your eyes have proved a fatal snare!

Ah me! some tell-tale envious one
Hath all our friendship's joys undone;
And never any effort spared
Till you, my gentle fawn, were scared!

A PARADOX.

Here you have my note, 'twill teach you P. 89.
How I suffer and repine.
Con it over, I beseech you;
You will see in every line
Traces of these tears of mine.

Water from my eyes is welling,
From the fire within my heart.
So from incense, sweetly smelling,
Black and oozy liquid starts,
While it burns in other parts.

A PROMISED MEETING.

Came a messenger with greeting
From a lady-love of mine,
With the promise of a meeting,
And her signet for a sign.

And he hinted at the burden
Of a tale which well I knew:
I would give my soul as guerdon,
If the tale he told were true.

SCANDAL.

I thank the tell-tales for their jealous prattling,
  Although such folk get scanty thanks from me.
They urged us on so by their foolish tattling,
  That things now are as they were said to be!

RESIGNATION.

P. 90. Is 'Amr then by Zeid forgot?
  Why hast thou of thy love bereft me?
Forbear! for mine's a wretched lot,
  And little patience hast thou left me.

Well in my sadness I rejoice,
  If thou art pleased that I display it:
If this be really of thy choice
  And knowledge, I will ne'er gainsay it!

God grant long life to thee! thou art
  Resolved, it seems, to slay me, dearest!
How sweet within a lover's heart,
  And yet how bitter, thou appearest!

Well, well! coquet and play the prude,
  Upon thy many charms relying.
Protesting does but little good,
  Because thy power there's no denying.

AN IMPROMPTU.

Aye, and welcome, ten times o'er!
  I rebel not, as you'll find.
Could I, when I love you more
  Than the whole of human-kind?

THE PRUDENT LOVER.

I have a love I will not name—
  A tale which none shall know.
The story of my ardent flame
  Does puzzle Mentor so!

If I might speak her name aloud, P. 91.
  A good excuse 'twould prove;
But folks must never be allowed
  To hear about my love.

No unknown maid,—though, sooth to tell,
  Unknown to vulgar eyes.
And, though she be a sweet gazelle,
She rages like a tiger fell,
  If e'er a lover sighs.

Behold how fast these teardrops flow!
  How faltering my speech.
Oh! listen not to tell-tales, though
  They babble on and preach.

My story is far otherwise
  Than tell-tale folks pretend;
There is no pardon, in my eyes,
  For treachery to a friend.

You scold; but one repeated theme
  Will tire the ear to death!
For me, unchanging would I seem
  Until my latest breath.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Thou who art absent from mine eye,
May Heaven bring thee yet more nigh!
Thou did'st within my heart abide
Till there was room for none beside.
Then prithee, wilt thou keep for me
A secret which is shared with thee?

A SAD CASE.

P. 92.

I've neither employment nor leisure,
By a tiresome dilemma I'm vexed;
In fine I've no hope and no pleasure
In this world nor yet in the next!

GRATITUDE.

If ere I forget thee, whom shall I recall?
None other hath ever occurred to my mind.
The day when I see thee is brightest of all,
For no joy but in gazing on thee can I find.

If thou art not with me, no pleasure I take
In any one else who my comrade may be.
I would bid an adieu to mankind for thy sake,
For no one is worth a reflection but thee.

To thy generous bounty what favours I owe;
Those favours, alas! I can never repay:
For I feel that my tongue is too feeble to show
My gratitude, let it talk on as it may.

A PICNIC ON THE NILE.

The water-wheels go round and round,
The song-birds trill with merry sound,
The hour is one of perfect joy,
Bright and pure without alloy.
Arouse thee, then, my pretty lass!
And send around the sparkling glass:
And hand it, bright as coins of gold,
Although it cost us coins untold.
Aye, pass it while the morn is bright, P. 93.
'Twill be but adding light to light.
Old wine and choice, it will be found
Like "sunbeams *not* diffused around."
'Tis pleasanter than fires that rise
Before the shivering traveller's eyes.

A seat beside the Nile was ours,
Upon a carpet strewn with flowers;
The wavelets rippled on apace,
Like dimples on a maiden's face;
And bubbles floated to the brink,
Round as the cups from which we drink.
We raced each other out to play,
Full early at the dawn of day.
With here a reverend divine,
And there a man who worshipped wine;
Here very grave and sober folk.
There others who enjoyed a joke.
The serious, and the lively too;
The false one mingling with the true;
Now in the cloister's calm retreat,
Now seated on the tavern's seat.
And Coptic monks, you understand,
A learned but a jovial band.

And pretty faces too were there,
Their owners kind as they were fair.
And one who from the Psalter sang,
In tones that like a psaltery rang;
While faces in dark cowls we spy,
Like full moons in the murky sky;
Faces, like those pictures fair,
To which they make their daily prayer;
P. 94. And 'neath the belt of each we traced
A slender and a wasp-like waist.
We joined them, and they scorned to spare
The old wine they had treasured there.
And, oh! we passed a happy day,
One notably most bright and gay!
Just such an one as fancy paints
Without formality's restraints.
In speaking of it do your best,
And then imagine all the rest!

THE CANDID LOVER.

I am a lover "heard about and seen,"
Ye shall not doubt the fervour of my flame!
I have a love so perfect, that I ween
Her loveliness should bear me free from blame.

When first for beauty she became renowned,
I was renowned for holding her so dear.
She is all lovely, neither have I found
Amongst the whole of human-kind her peer.

Her eyes are lustrous and they daze my heart;
Her hue is dark, I muse on't thro' the night.
Of what I suffer this is only part,
That she in mocking me doth take delight.

Oft may you see me weeping, full of care;
  While she is smiling, ever bright and gay.
And, oh! the night that darkens in her hair,
  How sweet to watch it, whiling time away!

And, oh! the morning of her visage bright,
  All hearts are dazzled by its dawning ray!
How sweet to be detected by its light! P. 95.
  What's done is done, so folks may have their say.

Ye tell-tales, ye were not on the alert;—
  Did ye but know the joys that I have met!
You say my heart's consoled for love's sweet hurt;
  'Tis false! I know not consolation yet.

'Twixt consolation and my constant breast,
  In love affairs, as great a distance lies
As that between the ground, whereon we rest,
  And yonder Pleiads shining in the skies.

MY LOVE.

Thou dwellest in my heart, and there
    Thy secrets rest.
Such neighbours and a house so fair!—
    In both be blest.
None else doth in that house abide
    To share with thee;—
Thou and those things thou didst confide!—
    Search now and see;

No misery, if it be thy will,
    Will I refuse:
Nay, if thou choosest e'en to kill,
    My death I choose.

In my heart treachery hath no place,
Burnt though it be.
By Heaven, 'tis fire, but not disgrace,
Which there ye see!

My soul be ransom for the maid;—
A moon so bright
That heart and eye are both dismayed
Before her light.
Both glowing fire her cheeks display
And water fair;
Yet neither of them, strange to say,
Is really there!

How sweet at night with sleepless eyes
To muse on her,
While in sweet converse with my sighs
Do I confer!
Through nights of absence, short or long,
Whiche'er they be,
I commune with my hopes so strong
And memory.

Nor, though her voice be passing sweet,
Take heed of it;
For lutes are often a deceit
To mortal wit!
Nor let her face, so fair and bright,
Thy heart betray.
Full oft the stars that shine by night
Lead men astray!

AN INVITATION.

Thou hast left me; tell me why? P. 96.
'Twas not so in days gone by.
Guile and absence from the fair
I could never, never bear.
Do not at a lover rail,
If his patience chance to fail.
Now mine eyeballs know not sleep,
Since thou taughtest them to weep.
But thou mayest yet, perchance,
Veil them with a single glance.
He who revels in thy sight
Needs not sun or moon for light.
Nought, since thou didst from me turn,
Of thy welfare could I learn.
Oh! for what has taken place
Come again and ask for grace:
Every fault thou didst commit,
Thy sweet face atones for it.

I've a charming party here
To delight thine eye and ear;
Singing maidens, fair and bright,
Pleasing both the ear and sight:
Comrades, too, whose deeds would look
Well in any story-book;
And wherever they are found,
Light and joy are spread around.
Join our party, then, I pray,
To complete our happy day.
Joy that is not shared by thee P. 97.
Is but scanty joy to me.
But if thou art only nigh,
Nought I care who else is by.

LOST COUNSEL.

Thou who dost exceed all bounds
  In insolence and pride,
Who sneerest without any grounds
  At 'Amr and at Zeid:

I see a something looming near
  Must happen anyhow;
When thou art sober thou shalt hear,
  But thou art drunken now.

My counsel in and out of place
  Is only thrown away.
I talk; but who has got the grace
  To care for what I say?

A WRETCH.

Give me, I pray, a little grace,
And rid me of that ugly face.
The greatest comfort that I know
Is when it pleases you to go.
You'll do no good in this world here,
And still less in the next, I fear.
I pity that man who in grief
Should look to you to give relief.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

P. 98.
Thou who didst from my sight depart,
None else is present in my heart.
I know how wretched thou must be,
'Tis just the same or worse with me.

My heart I know, will ne'er reform,
My language never grow less warm.
Amongst mankind a friend like thee
Is held in grateful memory.
Whene'er the Syrian Zephyr blows,
I bid it tell me all it knows.
How sweet its breeze in passing smells,
How passing sweet the tale it tells.
The perfume in its soft sweet sighs
That speaks of thee I recognize.

NILE SCENERY.

How sweet it is upon the Nile
As to and fro we pass;
As to and fro we send the while
The sparkling glass.

Lo! joys whereat the very earth
Appears to surge and heave,
And palaces where all is mirth
And none may grieve.

And oh! how many a pure delight
Have I enjoyed therein!—
May God forgive a luckless wight
Such venial sin!

And every joy that life bestows
Is false compared with this.
No spots on earth can equal those
In perfect bliss.

A BORE.

P. 99.

An excellent excuse have I,
  'Tis quite enough that you perceive it,
I do not from your presence fly
  By choice, but for a cause, believe it.

I live in bondage to a bore,
  Ah me! and what a bondage is it!
The more I shun him, all the more
  He tries to plague me with a visit.

The more to put him off I try,
  The more I find him on me creeping:
How many a time I from him fly,
  Yet at my side I find him keeping.

He has no business else to mind
  But mine, indeed he knows no other!
When shall I any respite find
  From one who gives me all this bother?

DEVOTION.

For thee are my efforts and labour and strife;
  Oh! would that such service got what it deserves.
I have followed thy pleasure the whole of my life,
  And if thou dost observe me not, Allah observes.

Thou wilt ne'er again have such a true friend as I.
  When others thou triest my words thou'lt recall,
Well! whatever thy wishes I freely comply;
  What thou wishest and lovest is dearer than all!

To serve without grudging; to use, every hour,
  My utmost endeavours; this task shall be mine.
And when I have done all that lies in my power,
  The choice to reward me or not shall be thine.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

You've made me feel lonely, oh master of mine! P. 100.
Without seeing you all the day long do I pine.
Such behaviour when coming from you appears strange:
Ah! I wish I knew who had occasioned this change.

A LETTER.

What can I do with a letter
  That will not my feelings express?
I'm perplexed, but I know not how better
  To let you know all my distress.

The paper is just upon burning
  From the heat of my sighs; and I feel
That until unto me you're returning,
  Nought e'er my poor bosom can heal.
Ah! the anguish of fruitlessly yearning
  Is not small by a very great deal!

HOME.

Fresh showers rain o'er thee, much-loved dwellingplace!
  What joys within thee did my heart attain!
How fair those steps upon thy soil to trace,
  Whose traces on my heart I still retain!

I know thee, thou familiar spot, where I
  With brilliant suns and moons such pleasure found;
Oh! will they come again, those days gone by?
  For cycling Time, they say, goes round and round!

P. 101.

ON A LADY OF MODERATE STATURE.

I loved her. She in perfect taste was dressed,
  A stately beauty did her form adorn;
Nor tall nor short, but perfect; while her breast
  Burst thro' the kerchief that was o'er it worn.

Her limbs were moderate in size but straight;
  Nor length nor shortness could you find to blame.
Her ear-rings quivered in their jealous hate,
  When to her anklets her long tresses came;—
Just like sweet spring-time, fair and temperate,
  When day and night in length are both the same.

ADVICE.

I'm sure of what has taken place,
  So let this strife and wrangling go.
In vain I've hidden your disgrace,
  Till now it's plain for all to know.

Already folks begin to talk,
  Oh, you who have so careless grown!
'Tis easier on the plain to walk,
  So leave these rugged paths alone.

Whatever you of others say,
  Of you, be sure, they'll say much more.
Then guard your tongue that so you may
  Rest easy.—What has gone before

Is quite sufficient. For the rest,
  There's my advice. I've given it;
Take it or not, I've done my best,
  And henceforth act as you think fit.

THE FUTURE.

Oh! that I could only say P. 102.
In what land my grave shall be;
When shall be the fatal day?
Would it were but known to me!

Ever travelling to and fro,
Thus my life-time wastes away;
Not a country do I know,
Where it is my lot to stay.

Could I, after all, but know
How my life shall ended be!
And from all my grief and woe,
When, ah! when, shall I be free?

Since I must come to at last,
Why thus drunk should I remain?
Can I e'er recall the past
Of a life-time spent in vain!

AN EPIGRAM.

No shortening of the months has taken place,
'Tis that to press on unto thee they try.
The days in full sail towards thy presence race;
So eager are they that they nearly fly.

A REMONSTRANCE.

Ah! you who thus ever your promises break: P. 103.
God knows which of us the worst bargain will find!
Alas! that I e'er such a friendship should make,
As to cause me this trouble of heart and of mind.

By heaven! there is not a single good trait
  In your character which a relator could name.
You who such excess of base pride do display,
  Believe me there must be an end to the same.

You injured me when I'd no helper or friend.
  Ah! where for a helper or friend shall I seek?
The strong shows his strength when he has to contend
  With the strong man, not when he contends with the weak.

You deceived me in spite of your promises made,
  But your sentence in public opinion is heard:
For this action of yours nothing good can be said,
  And no one will give you a single good word!

DEVOTION.

Though my heart thine absence blames,
Thine excuse affection frames!
'Twould delight thee, didst thou see
How my bosom honours thee.

Be thine orders what they may,
I will never disobey.
I had ne'er the traitor played,
Till these tears thy trust betrayed.

P. 104. Shorten this sad life of mine,
So may Heaven lengthen thine!
With a visit honour me,
So may Heaven honour thee.

I had hoped thou would'st be near
All the month and all the year.
By thee I am still forgot,
Yet do I forget thee not.

Thou canst bear to parted be,
Would 'twere granted, too, to me.
Thou didst see my constancy,
And 'twas that deceived thee.

Didst thou come to meet thy love,
Would it such a hardship prove?
Now thy lover dies of love;
God reward thee from above.

A LETTER OF THANKS.

I've laden it with thanks profuse,
And bade it carry my excuse.
I know not how I can indite
An answer to the verse you write.
The poetry which you sent to me—
I should say rather "sorcery"—
To me the graceful poetry came,
And gave me an immortal fame.
I saw thee, and I seemed to trace
My own loved Egypt in thy face.
A passing thought on me you cast, P. 105.
Recalling days of joy long past.
Ah! poetry once was all the joy
That did my fervent thoughts employ.
Now passion's garb is from me torn,
The new and eke the old and worn.

A WRETCH.

Curse the fellow! 'tis a shame
  That he should have mentioned been;
One who utters but his name,
  Tigris could not wash him clean!
Though a thousand prayers he say,
'Twould not take the sin away!

IN MEMORIAM.

Oh! thou to whom I looked, and to none other!
Few are my helpers now, since thou hast died.
My all in all! to whom, as to a brother,
I could my griefs and secrets all confide.

My home, without thee, seemeth lone and dreary;
In heavenly regions thou hast gone to dwell;
While I am left behind thee, sad and weary,
To find in losing thee a present hell.
My heart, thy neighbour, burneth at thine hand:
Yet "love thy neighbour" is the Lord's command.

HAPPY MEMORIES.

It was a night as fair as clearest day,
Its darkness lighter than the moon's bright ray.
P. 106. 'Twas like the lustre in the eye of Time;
Its short duration was its only crime.
It passed as in the twinkling of an eye;
'Twixt the two days its trace could none descry.
Ere eve was gone its morning did begin;
Sweeter than sleep was wakefulness therein.
I passed it, how it boots not to enquire,
In sweetest converse with my soul's desire.
All joys were present to me when she came;
All conversation could she deftly frame,
In jest or earnest. Pleasant company,
At home or on a journey would she be.
And there was one, a young gazelle, beside,
Attended by a body-guard of pride;
With ruddy lips, with graceful form that swayed,
Charming the hearer when she sang or played;
For these and other beauties she was fair!
There too was wine to close the doors of care;

A pure and noble vintage, human sense
Could scarce conceive its passing excellence;
So clear 'twas scarce apparent to the sight.
At length the sky displayed its dawning light,
The stars were soon immersed in daylight deep,
The breath of morn aroused men from their sleep,
The zephyr lightly swept across the trees,
The flowers' sweet scent was scattered by the breeze,
And then we rose;—for joys will never last!
Its kindly veil the night had o'er us cast; P. 107.
(The greatest pleasures are of none avail,
Unless enjoyed behind a kindly veil).
My grateful thanks are due to murky night,
For it has brought me many a pure delight;
When danger looms, it wraps me with its wing;
It knows my love, yet tells not anything;
Its heart melts towards me when it spreads its shade;
I thank it,—"thanks by such as me are paid."

EPIGRAM.

You are my lord where'er I be,
And on your grace the choice doth rest,
The proof is that you find in me
At once a neighbour, slave, and guest.

LOVE AND NIGHT.

Sheref ed dîn informs us that the poet composed the following, and recited it to him at the citadel of Cairo, on the 5th of Moḥarrem, A. H. 641 = A. D. 1243.

(Some writers wrongly attribute the poem to Sheikh 'Omar ibn el Fáridh.)

All other men can bear to part;
All other lovers can deceive!
Love's secret lies within my heart,
Which none but God shall e'er perceive.

And there is one who in my eyes
Is like the young branch of a tree,
To which my heart for ever flies!
In converse passing sweet is she;
But ah! it is a sweet I ween
That bursts with grief the lover's spleen!
I bless her e'en as I complain,
Aye, thank her for my very pain!
P. 108. My heart rebounds when she is near,
Nor need it merit a reproach,
For 'tis her home, and loves to hear
The joyful news of her approach.
Oh! thou whose love hath made of me
A proverb in the mouths of men,
My tale can ne'er forgotten be,
'Tis written with a lasting pen!
Oh Night! and wilt thou never end?
Oh Love! and whither dost thou tend?
Oh Night, be long! Oh Love, be sure!
For both these things can I endure.
A warrior's guerdon sure is due
To me, if it indeed be true
That night is on the side of sin,
For I have striven much therein!
My eye, and that of yonder star,
Through thee, oh night, both wakeful are!
Thou dost embrace thy present moon,
Ah! would mine own were coming soon;
For then mine eye would see full well
Which is most brilliant of the twain!
Mine, mine in beauty doth excel,—
As daylight is the difference plain.

MEETING.

God bless that night of meeting past,
  Of joy unmixed and pure,
That came and went away so fast;
No shadow o'er its joy was cast
  Save that 'twould not endure.

She came without formality,
  No promise made us wait,
But oh! my heart was like to fly
With unexpected victory, P. 109.
  And with its joy elate!

And canst thou, oh my heart! divine
  Who now is coming near?
And can ye see, ye eyes of mine?
Thou moon in Heaven, thou need'st not shine,
  For mine on earth is near!

Thus, thus, oh night, abide for aye!
  And thou, oh morning light,
Then prithee, prithee keep away,
For oh! in converse sweet and gay
  We passed that pleasant night.

So wondrous the discourses were
  That passed between us two,
No novel could with them compare;
But o'er each trace of things so fair
  A modest veil we drew.

We sat together, we alone,
  With none to tell the tale;
And when the night at length had flown,
Our story unto none was known,
  But only to the gale!

IRÆ AMANTIUM.

With modest look and downcast head
She made excuses and expressed
Her sorrow; but I quickly sped
Towards the ground her feet had pressed,
To kiss her footprints. Then I said:
"My love, it cannot ever be
"That thou shouldst my forgiveness need,
"Or sue for pardon unto me!
"These spiteful folks no longer heed,—
"Their words are dubious;—in fine,
"Thou seest with those dear eyes of thine,
"And surely vision should prevail
"Over a mere reported tale."
P. 110. "How long," said she, "wilt thou despair,
"And this thy garb of folly wear?
"Thou cravedst love and now dost weep;—
"Thou'rt wind and rain,—all sighs and tears."
My friend, these things I did not keep
From thee, the news has reached thine ears,
Thyself didst then see what was done,
And more went on when thou hadst gone.
In none but thee my trust I place;
Deprive me not, then, of thy grace!
Perchance thou wilt e'en yet preserve
The memory of our love and truth,
And, when we are grown old, observe
The compacts which we made in youth.

GRATITUDE.

Thou hast been good to me and bound my hurts,
The broken heart it is thy wont to bind;
And thou hast given me more than my deserts,
Wherefore I thank thee so long as I live,
And pray for thee. Alas! I cannot find
Language in which to praise thee, and to give
Thy worth its due. And able though I be
In uttering praises, and though rich in song,
Thy many bounties are too much for me!
My liege, I know that unto me belong
Such honours through thy condescending grace,
That thou with favour unto me dost turn
E'en when I cannot look upon thy face.
And it is quite enough for me to learn
That I am sometimes present to thy thought,
And am sometimes to thy remembrance brought!

AN INVITATION.

The day it is a showery day, P. 111.
  The cup goes round from hand to hand;
The very ground itself you'd say
  Is reeling, loth to let us stand!

The choice old wine I greatly fear
  Has taken hold upon our wit,
But then again full many a year
  Has also taken hold of it!

So fine it seems within the cask,
  'Tis like a secret in a heart!—
'Tis nearly gone, and if you ask,
  The whole would seem a little part!

'Tis fire within the cup, forsooth,
  Within us 'tis a light divine!—
The cup appears to be the truth,—
  The falsehood, the transparent wine!

And then we've many a fresh young spray
  Of fragrant herbs and brilliant flowers;
And comrades such that you would say,
  "Too short is this sweet life of ours."

And then we've many a pretty lass,
  As brilliant as a sun or moon,
To hand around the sparkling glass;
  And, if you love a song or tune,

A minstrel in our midst have we—
  The prince of songsters, men declare.
No rival in the world has he,
  His music is so passing fair.

Whene'er he sings, the very ground
  With ecstasy appears to move;
His voice is rich, but, I'll be bound,
  A jolly beggar he will prove!

P. 112. And when he sings, the people look
  As though they melted right away!
And then we have a splendid cook,
  A knowing fellow in his way.

And here the stew-pots you may see
  All boiling on the blazing coal.
And if you'll join the company,
  'Twill give a finish to the whole.

And everything you can require
  We have at hand to offer you,
As good as man could e'er desire;
  And there is plenty of it too.

TO A STRANGER, INTRODUCING HIMSELF TO HIM.

Oh thou who didst gain my affections or ever I looked on thy form,
'Tis the love of the heart, not the love of the eye, that is steadfast and warm!
I heard of thy manifold virtues which did all my senses amaze,
Then how would it be if upon thee I once were permitted to gaze?
But I hope and I trust that kind Heaven will bring us together some day,
For he who can see for himself can dispense with what other folks say.

THE SAME.

I loved you, but not that your form had ever occurred to mine eye,
For the heart can perceive what the keenest of eyesight could never descry!
'Twas simply your virtues that kindled in me an affection so warm,
My heart took in all their full meaning, though powerless to put them in form!
When people began to describe you, I gave to my fancy full play,
And pictured your qualities far above all that such people could say.
Oh! when shall my eyesight partake of the pleasure that reaches my ear?
Oh! when shall I see you, and realize all the good things which I hear?

P. 113. ON A FOOL WITH A LONG BEARD.

I know a certain fool who wears
A monstrous beard with bushy hairs.
I've searched inside it for his face,
But cannot find a single trace!
The beard's notorious, while he
Appears an unknown quantity.
'Tis quite a raree-show,—a bull
That wears a beard so round and full.
And if its age were only half,
'Twould prove a second Golden calf!
Ugh! such a beard! and, what is worse,
It isn't even worth a curse!
Within it there is lots of room
For many a vermin-town and tomb!
Divide it into ten times ten,—
One part would do for ten good men.
So bushy, bristly, and so big,
It is the envy of a pig.
'Twould satisfy the beast, I swear,
If it possessed a single hair.
Tho' on his face the thing has grown,
The subsoil is some carious bone.
'Tis dull and heavy, dark and brown,
P. 114. Just like a rain-cloud o'er the town.
Its owner, sure, could never be
Of any honest family.
And he who such a thing could wear,
Would not be noticed anywhere.
Why, when he tries to walk abroad,
He'll stumble o'er it in the road!
And as he goes along it must
Sweep on the ground and raise the dust!
Its growth has hitherto endured,
Because it gets so well manured!

The nasty, dirty, stinking hair,
No Merry-Andrew at a fair
So laughable a thing would wear!
If in the street he dares to come,
They'll lead it on with fife and drum!
'Twill bring him in as good a crop
As any farm,—if we but drop
The final letter of the word,
And let another one be heard!
For when folks meet the beard, we hear
A rumbling sound produced by fear,—
To wit, what you would find expressed
In Grammar as a sound suppressed.

TO A TIRESOME OLD WOMAN.

Pray, madam, no such error make,
Egad! you don't my fancy take.
'Twas very shabby
Of folks to cheat you with a word
So strange and palpably absurd,—
Old Mother Tabby!

You can't imagine, I am sure, P. 115.
That I've a heart which can endure
Your folly arrant.
The tales I've heard of you, how ill
You're always going on, would fill
A tome, I'll warrant.

They've been related all to me,
Until I almost seemed to be
In person present.
And when you please, for your behoof
I'll tell you with most ample proof
These things unpleasant.

And if you happen to forget,
Some people can recall them yet,
        If they've a mind to.
I've oft enquired, but cannot find
A person amongst all mankind,
        Whom you've been kind to.

You're quite the lady—so you say;
But this is not a lady's way.
        You've heard perchance, Ma'am,
That when you lie, it shouldn't be
A lie that any one can see
        With half a glance, Ma'am!

ON A FOOL.

Tell me why, you stupid lout,
You have let your secret out.
When I con your business o'er,
I'm bewildered more and more.
God withhold reward from you,
And save us from the harm you do!

AN URGENT INVITATION.

P. 116. Let me soon thy visage see;
Heal me with a look from thee!
Come as thou didst come before
Unto me in times of yore.
Come and hear a story, dear,
'Twill be worth the journey here.
And, to sum up, prithee haste,
For thou hast no time to waste;
When a chance is past in vain,
In the heart regrets remain.

CONGRATULATORY VERSES

Addressed to the Sultán el Melik el Manṣúr Núr ed dín 'Alí, son of el Melik Moezz Aibek es Ṣáliḥí, A.H. 655 = A.D. 1257, on the occasion of the "Feast of Oblations."

Thy slave offers thee gratulations
  On the tenth of the month, on the day
Of the feast,—of the "Feast of Oblations"—
  Thou King who this era dost sway!
To your highness's notice I merely
  Would bring one slight fact, and explain
That in public and private, sincerely
  I ever remain.

A petition to Heaven I proffer
  Incessantly, sire, for thy sake,
In the five daily prayers which I offer,
  In the daily prostrations I make.
And I hope—if I live for a season,
  So that thou may'st my services claim—
That Time shall have more and more reason
  To honour thy name.

And thy bounty I trust will be ever,
  As now, comprehensive and free;
Not proportioned to my poor endeavour,
  But worthy of one such as thee.
And if thou such favours bestowest
  On me, I am wealthy in praise
And in paying my thanks, as thou knowest,
  In eloquent lays.

P. 117. By thy favours my girding is tightened,
My hand with more strength is endowed;
My good reputation is heightened,
My position is more and more proud.
Though my fate at life's start was unhandsome,
Thou wilt make it up towards its decline.
May the lives of all men be thy ransom,
The foremost life mine!

TO AN UPSTART FELLOW.

I never yet could bear deceit,
But more and more from you I meet.
You walk, and wheresoe'er you go
Your pride and vain conceit you shew.
You're not a man of any worth,
You're not a man of power or birth,
And yet whene'er I see you, then
You try to put down other men.
Your virtues, true, are sometimes seen,
But very few and far between,
And people talk about you, though
The facts I don't pretend to know;
And all I pray for is that I
May not through your misconduct die.
May none stand up in your defence,
May no one pardon your offence!

IMPROMPTU.

[On being asked after his health.]

If you ask me how Zoheir is,
I can tell you in his name,
In reply to kind enquiries—
"Well, so long as you're the same."

TO A FRIEND.

If you come, as you were wont,
I will give you thanks profuse. P. 118.
If you stay away—but don't!—
I'll invent you an excuse.

"TO REMIND."

Letters, oh Abu'l Hasan! may remind
The absent-minded man who takes no heed;
But one whose eyes are set within his mind
Of such reminders has not any need.

A RECEIPT.

So! after all this fuss, my friend,
A "slight acknowledgement" you send.
I'm much obliged, but, to be plain,
'Tis not enough to ease my pain.
Well, though I may be nought to you,
I'll honour you as is your due!

THE MEETING.

And is not once enough to slay?
How oft to slay me wilt thou sally?
What think'st thou of a lover, pray,
Who, pale before thee, cannot rally?

Who hides his love—what canst thou think P. 119.
Of such a strangely timid lover?—
With hands that point and eyes that wink,
Lest other folks his love discover.

But there's a maiden fair and slight,
  All hearts are stirred before her glances;
In youth and beauty's armour dight,
  She cries: "What champion now advances?"

We met and I attained to bliss;
  Her scruples were not unsurmounted.
And when I chanced her cheek to kiss,
  A thousand times or more I counted!

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT.

Your ever welcome presents came,
  Exceeding all I knew before.
Methought that I knew how to frame
Sufficient thanks, but, to my shame,
  They've shewn my weakness on that score!

THE CHAMPION OF LOVE.

My friend, why have those qualities departed
  Which I deemed so peculiarly thine own?
Thy late reproach hath left me broken-hearted;—
  'Twas too hard for me, couldst thou but have known.

And yet have I no right to be offended,
  For thou didst but repeat a likely tale.
But even had I sinned as folks pretended,
  Should thy forgiveness be of none avail?

P. 120. Aye! I have sinned, but then I have repented,
  As Má'iz came repenting of his crime.
But 'twas not treacherously—I am prevented
  By love from wronging thee at any time!

Dangerous paths and perils without number
  Between my heart and consolation lie!
Between my restless eyelids and sweet slumber
  Lie desert-tracts from which repose doth fly!

And if I say, "My love I cannot smother
  "For 'waving willow,' or for 'flowery dale;'"
At thee my verses hint and at no other;
  Thy name alone these allegories veil.

Let me confront my rival! I can meet him!
  My voice is fearless and my front is bold;
And of the conflicts wherein I shall beat him,
  By many an elder shall the tale be told.

Now by thy troth! heed not the stories spiteful,
  Which envious folk have published far and wide:
Thy face alone is to mine eye delightful,
  Thy love alone doth in my heart abide.

I will not breathe a word of thy displeasure,
  Lest those who hate me laugh at my despair;
I will pretend that thou my love dost treasure,—
  That all our converse has been calm and fair.

For many rival me in thine affection,
  But I will fight them to the bitter end.
Lo! now in truce I let them find protection,
  And now I bid them for their lives contend!

EPIGRAM ON THE WEATHER.

The summer with untimely heat
  Has come upon us far too soon.
Oh, April! this unwonted feat
  Will leave no work at all for June!

FAIR BUT COY.

P. 121.

Her cheek's a sentry in advance;
A moon that makes the darkness day.
Her stature is like any lance,
And like a waving reed doth sway.

Her eyes are ever wide awake,
Though dreamy as a fawn's to see!
The moon is blurred for her sweet sake,
The branch is drooping on the tree.

The fawn before her flies for shame,
Towards the desert far and wide.
No peer has she, and none can claim
To be regarded by her side.

The fawn that in the glade doth stray,—
The idol of the fane is she!
Thou who didst bid me hope—I pray
That I may ne'er despair of thee!

To me thou art so coy and cold,
To others ever kind and near.
Our quarrel, like the wars of old,
Doth linger on from year to year.

Ah! that is why thy young cheek glows
With yonder ruddy hue so fair;
As though it were a damask rose
Thou takest for a veil to wear!

EPIGRAM.

One young shaver took to shaving, P. 122.
  Having lost his childish grace;
And I said, "He's not behaving
  "In a manner commonplace;
"But, while we with wonder stare on,
  "Now he finds there's so much *hair on*,
"See, the fellow *mows his* face!

CONGRATULATORY ODE.

[Addressed to the Grand and Honourable Emîr Mejd ed dîn Ibn Ismâ'îl el Lamṭî on the occasion of his assuming the governorship of Ḳoṣ, A. H. 607 = A. D. 1229. This was the first panegyric composed by the poet.]

Long may'st thou live thine office to enjoy,
  Thou who art clad in robes of dignity!
May'st thou have pleasure in thy new employ,
  Thou who hast planted bounty as a tree.

Thou comest to us as the gentle showers
  Come to the fields, whereat so fair they gleam,
And breathe such perfume from the new-sprung flowers!
  O'er all the Sons of Time thou art supreme,
For when their names in history shall be told,
  The highest, noblest, chiefest, shall be thine!
The sons of Lamṭî were renowned of old
  For gifts and valour;—in their generous line
Men hope for help when all the world deceives!
A cloud that pours, a mighty sea that heaves,
A moon that shines, a keen-edged sword that cleaves,
A lion stern, a mountain firm and staid,—
  Nay, I am wrong, he is beyond compare;
And though a fair comparison were made,
  To leave comparisons would be more fair.

When men do kindness, of whatever kind,
  He brings it out in aspects ever new.
P. 123. He shows one favour; others lurk behind,
  Like poetry, fresh and varying in hue.

The haughtiest princes take up their abode
  In him as in the highest place on earth,
And you may meet them waiting in his road
  With downcast looks, and stricken at his worth.

Through him proud Teim, when rival tribes contest
  For the supremacy in rank and name,
Is owned to be the noblest and the best;
  Foremost of men in power, of noblest fame,
Most free in bounty and most great in mind;
  When ignorant men from Virtues would detract,
In theirs no blemish can they hope to find,—
  Nor are such people ignorant of the fact.

They are the tribe who meet all hardships dire
  With many a knight to hardships dire inured;
When war or feasting lights the beacon fire,
  He seems like Magians by its love allured.
Unto his science mysteries are revealed,
Unto his skill the hard-mouthed chargers yield;
Where'er he chargeth stoutest warriors swerve,
  Whene'er he speaketh glib-tongued men are dumb.
My liege, may Heaven thine honours aye preserve!
  Fresh, blooming, waving, may their branch become.
The Glory of the Faith[1] in thee attains
  Fresh glory,—is more honoured and renowned;
And Saïd's province greater weight obtains,
  Thereby its valley seemeth "holy ground;"

[1] This is the signification of the name of the subject of the panegyric, Mejd ed dîn.

A land whose stars thy coming setteth right,
  In culmination after long decline:
Her hills shall come to greet thee, and invite
  The dew-drops of that bounteous hand of thine.
Yet well they know the rain-clouds of the sky,
  Though kind to other lands, for them are dry!

Lo! here I weave a varied garb of rhymes,
  And none but thee shall in that garb be dressed.
I had restrained them;—e'en as for their crimes
  Thou dost restrain ill-doers in arrest;—
Although I have not heard of a complaint
Against my rhymes to warrant their restraint.
So long had I restrained them, they became P. 124.
  Like wild things, even as thyself may'st see;
Perchance thy bounty yet may make them tame,
  And if they do not justice unto thee,
One such as thou art doth delight to shew
Favour to those who fail in duty so.
As when the drawers at a well-spring cease,
Its tranquil waters, being left in peace,
  Are all the clearer; so amongst them all,
Thou may'st find something destined to increase
  The reader's pleasure, and to hold in thrall
"The Thrall's son," aye! and Mutalammis too!

And yet if all the eloquence on earth
Were given to me to eulogize thy worth,
  E'en then, alas! what could I hope to do!

MEMORIES.

Oh! thou who dost dwell with my heart,
  Why hast thou deserted mine eye?
Thou from whom I could never yet part,
  Oh! why from my side dost thou fly?

Thou didst dwell in my heart, ('twas thine own,)
With none else thy dwelling to share;
Ah me! how deserted and lone
It seems now that thou art not there.

Thou richest of mortals in all
That is lovely, believe in the truth
Of a lover whom people would call
A bankrupt in patience forsooth.

By the moments when no one was there,
Which in sweet conversation we passed,
By our honour unsullied and fair,
On which not a slur has been cast,

Accord me thy favour again,
If only to anger my foe,
That the doubt and the fear and the pain
Which thy conduct has caused me may go!

If thy favour is yet to be had,
I shall also have honour, for then
Through its means I shall find myself clad
In the noblest of dress amongst men.

God bless them! those neighbours so dear;
If their name be but mentioned to me,
I shed for them many a tear,
Which it makes the rain jealous to see.

Ah, the home where I loved so to dwell!
Where so oft I have longed to behold
The gentle and timid gazelle,
That lived there so petted of old.

P. 125. If we chance to draw near the retreat,
We find that the breath of the gale
Is laden with odours most sweet,
Which its memories precious exhale.

We walk, as we step o'er its floor,
  Barefooted with reverence profound,
And it seems that, like Moses of yore,
  We are walking on hallowed ground.

THE BUSYBODY.

A friend of mine was blaming me,
  On seeing my reduced estate.
I said, "I am a man, you see,
  Of habit most inveterate
In spending all that I possess
On those possessed of loveliness.

'Tis not the first time things like these
  Have happened; troubles of this kind
Befall me often. If I please
  Myself *you* need not surely mind.
If folks would mind their own affairs,
They'd have no time for other's cares."

THE BORE.

I have a certain friend, but then
He has no sense like other men.
Where'er I tarry, all the while
He holds me fast in durance vile.
He has no soul—but on the whole,
Rocks do not often have a soul!
Meet him whensoe'er I may,
I count it an unlucky day.

P. 126.

MUTUAL DEPENDENCE.

To beg of other folks is hard indeed,
And 'tis a comfort not to stand in need;
For ne'er a help or solace will he find,
Who publishes his troubles to mankind.
Yet, after all, one cannot do without them:
"All people need the people round about them."

MISTRUST.

Trusty friends are very rare,
Ne'er rely on any one:
Those are freest far from care,
Who have made a friend of none.

Ne'er a comrade have I found,
One with whom I might consort;
Yet I've often looked around;
And I've tested every sort!

USELESS FRIENDS.

I came to you in hopes to gain
Some help against my enemies.
I thought you men, but it is plain
That I was wrong in my surmise!

You don't protect a neighbour's fame,
You don't give aid when others call,
You don't ward off another's shame,
You don't support a friend at all.

ABSENCE.

When thou art flown, my pleasures fly;
  Ne'er may'st thou from my side depart!
What joy thy presence gives the eye,
  What rest thy presence gives the heart!

Thou who art absent from me now, P. 127.
  Ah! if I only knew the road,
I'd walk upon my head, I vow,
  To bring me to thy loved abode.

From me on that beloved face
  May loving salutations light;
And Heaven grant me that his place
  May ne'er be vacant in my sight.

THE JEALOUS LOVER.

Somebody's envoy is greeting me!
  Speak to me, thou of the perfumed voice.—
Greets me again! Then this must be
  A sign of her favour. Rejoice, rejoice!
For she, who erewhile had forgotten her vow,
Begins to remember her lover now.

From the lips of the envoy reproof there came;
  Ah! hard of heart is this love of mine.
Tell her—I'll hold thee free from blame—
  'Tis ever for this that I repine.
Tell her my love endures for aye,
Tell her my doubts endure alway.

How shall I visit her all alone?
  Ah me! for the guardian that watches and pries;
Yet it were only my duty, I own,
  To walk to her e'en on my head and eyes!
Oh! I cannot endure that any should see
That moon and that myrtle-branch but me.

And I cannot endure, so jealous am I,
  That a single letter that forms thy name
Should sound in the ears of the sitters-by.
  And I call thee "Some-body," feeling shame
That any should know that I speak of thee—
And yet thou art all the world to me!

I'm jealous of even the gale that blows,
  For it seeks that swaying form of thine;
I'm fearful of even the page that goes
  About the room with the rosy wine,
For it seems to me, as I see him pass,
Thy cheek is glowing within the glass!

DANGEROUS GROUND.

P. 128. A friend of mine began to scold;
  "With all my heart and soul," said I;
"He's only offering me a hold
"Upon him:—if he *will* be sold,
  "Bear witness, all folks standing by!"

BROKEN PROMISES.

Ask of the troop, (if haply from the Ghor
They should pass by thy door) they will relate
The pangs I feel, the sad complaints I pour.
My tale has left the troop intoxicate,
My wine— my cup has made them so elate!

Send not thy greeting on the gentle gale,
My comrades would suspect its odour sweet!
There is a home within the Ghor's fair vale,
Where oft I wander, and I love to meet
The suns and moons which brighten that retreat!

For such as these the lover fondly weeps;
But ah! mine eye-lid, when 'Arús has gone,
The house no more its perfumed odour keeps.
Ah me! the grief that comes on me by night,
Wherewith my heart is scorched and burned outright.

Bright stars again are shining in the skies,
Alas! not those dear friends I knew of yore!
I see a fair full-moon again arise,
Alas! not my fair love of heretofore!
Upon our parting day an oath I swore;

You swore to me, by every form of vow,
That lovers love to proffer—and to break!
Promised to come on Thursday;—Thursdays now
Have gone and passed since first those words you spake,
Yet no fulfilment does your promise take.

Well! what seems good to you, seems good to me;
And if my ruin should prove your delight,
Why then my speedy ruin let it be!
Yet is my soul still precious in my sight,
Though he who loves is oft a soulless wight.

THE REFORMED DRUNKARD.

P. 129.

They told me such an one had now
  Turned sober and repented quite;
Amazed, I asked him when and how
  He'd spurned the cup and its delight?

I saw him yestere'en once more,
  Upon a bed of roses lain,
As drunk and jovial as before,
  And then the mystery was plain:

For, when I asked him what he meant,
  And begged he would the cause rehearse
Which had induced him to repent?
  He answered: *'Twas an empty purse!*

THE FAWN.

Leave me and that fair fawn alone;
My passion for her is well known.
Well, well! she shall have her own way,
Let her torture me just as she may.
The wine which her rosy lips shed,
Has mounted up into her head.
Oh! her stature, how tall and upright,
And her waist, too, how slender and slight.
She came all unwatched and unseen,
A visitor welcome, I ween.
Well, 'tis no such great wonder to tell
Of a timid and skittish gazelle.

ON A GIRL WITH DARK HAIR.

Somebody grows very dear, P. 130.
And grows in beauty more and more.
My heart, when she's no longer near,
It grows more lonely, sad and sore.

To make me lovesick that is why
Upon her cheeks these texts are writ:
"The Sun when 'tis eclipsed[1]", and, "By
"The night when darkness covers it[2]!"

ON AN EVIL-LIVER.

Alas, unhappy wretch! how long
Will he be steeped in sin and wrong?
He lives by evil all the day,
And sleeps a hungry bird of prey.
He's like a toper, for he still
Keeps on upon his course of ill.

AN APPEAL.

I own the debt, and I can pay
The love that thou would'st have, alway!
Then why should'st thou thus angry be?
And wherefore turn away from me?
  Oh! thou who dost desert thy friend,
Say, shall our earnest mutual love
  Be brought to this untimely end?
I swear to thee by God above,

[1] Korân, c. 81. ver. 1.   [2] Ibid. c. 92. ver. 1.

I would not to thy side approach,
But through pure love without reproach.
And shall it last, this conduct cold
And heartless which I now behold?
And shall it come again no more,
The friendship which I knew of yore?
Ah! if thou could'st but only see
The miseries that have come on me,
Thou might'st perchance be kind again
For once, to recompense my pain!
P. 131. The Tell-tale used to let me be
So long as thou wert kind to me.
But when thou didst thy comrade spurn,
With chiding did he then return.
My trust in thee is firm and strong,
  Howe'er the spiteful Tell-tale strive,
And set me on to do thee wrong.
  And ever, while I am alive,
Inviolate will I maintain
The secret bond between us twain:—
Aye, even though in anger keen
The sword was drawn us twain between.
Each day, as breaks the morning light,
One thought affords me still delight,
That haply e'er the day be o'er
My friend and I may meet once more!
And all the day I long and sigh,
  With this one only thought imbued,
Thy messenger may yet draw nigh
  With tidings glad of love renewed!

A REPROBATE.

You keep on talking to us till we're forced to talk to you;
Men try to shun you, but you won't allow them so to do.
I have to hold back now through being so free for your behoof—
Well! honest folks from evil things should always hold aloof.
He whom I now address can neither birth nor manners claim;
He whom I now rebuke has neither goods nor a good name.

THE LOVER'S STORY.

Oh! thou who art so cool and prone to slight,
What pleaseth thee is pleasing in my sight.
For God's sake, loved one! come and tell me now
Where is thy love, where thine indulgent brow?
For whom of all mankind would'st thou change me,
Who would take none, God knows! in change for thee?
Mine is a tale, to which thy love has led,
These flowing tears, the source whence it has spread.
Mine is a breast that has no patience left,
Mine is an eye of drooping sleep bereft.
I have a boon, but reticence and shame P. 132.
Prevent me still from giving it a name;
A boon I've tried to hint at all along,
But thou dost take my innuendoes wrong!
Against my hope thy glance sets like a sword;—
This is a *future*, that a *perfect* word!
I would that I thy promise might obtain.
To waste my life in pressing thee in vain!
This is my story—this my tale, and now
'Tis in thy hands, decide as thou knowest how.

THE EXILE.

Shall parting and absence for ever
  Embitter my life till its close?
My wearied-out eye, shall it never
  Indulge in the sweets of repose?

Ah me! though mine eye till the present
  Full many a country has seen,
Yet nothing delightful or pleasant
  In any for me has there been!

No city like Cairo I treasure
  Of all the fair cities I know;
There's nought like its life full of pleasure,
  And wealthy contentment, I trow.

No! after the city I sigh for,
  All towns are the same at their best;
No preference ever have I for
  One town of them more than the rest!

If my home be a home not containing
  My loved ones, whatever its worth,
No difference is there remaining
  'Twixt home and the rest of the earth.

TO A SICK FRIEND.

My friend, I trust these visits you receive
  Of sympathy will very soon be o'er;
For 'tis a time that makes all hearts to grieve.
  I should have called upon you long before,

But for the sabbath; for, as people say,
The sabbath is a most unlucky day
To visit sick folks. Do not think I change: P. 133.
  I throw myself into what others do;
All my surroundings have of late been strange,
  So I adapt my thoughts, and habits too,
To those of folks about me. Every race
  Has its familiar habits,—its own laws,
Rules and observances, on which men place
  The greatest stress. And for this very cause,
He who conforms not to the general rule
Is looked on as a dull and hateful fool.

THE LOVE-SICK SWAIN.

How shall I gain release at last
  From love that formeth my soul's alloy?
There is a fair one holds me fast
  In love I may never, alas, enjoy!
Would'st thou, O moon! in yonder sky,
  Seek to compare with such as she?
That were aspiring all too high.
  Branch of the desert, let her be!
  Graces like her's are not for thee.

People began to blame me, then
  Rose up her beauty to plead my case.
Gracious heavens! what wondrous pen
  Did the *waw*[1] of her ringlet trace?
See how her charms she doth enhance
  By beauty-spots on her cheeks so fair.
She passed me by with a saucy glance,
  As who should say "Follow me if you dare!"
How shall I hope of her mien to tell—
Say, have ye seen a young gazelle?

[1] The letter و.

Though she has never a fault, her eyes
Languishing, dark, and drooping are.
P. 134. Bright and happy her moon doth rise,
Ah! but its rays eclipse my star.
Thou who withholdest thy love so sweet,
With hate so bitter thou'rt far too free.
Surely thou would'st not deem it meet
That I should perish wrongfully,
Dying in vain for love of thee.

TRUTH.

Whether it be far or near,
Still my heart doth thee regard;
And, as thou well knowest, dear,
Faithfully my love I guard.

ON A NEGRO.

There's a nigger who every good feeling doth lack,
He snuffles and snorts from sheer malice and gall!
His temper, his actions, his face, and his back,
Are ugly, and evil, and coarse, one and all.
A crow,—but less decent in manners and dress!
A dog,—but without its good faith, I confess!

A COMPLAINT.

Why do I see thee waste me here,
And cherish all others with all thy care?
Dissolute, yet when I appear,
Preaching for ever, and full of prayer.

Cruel thou art to me, but still, P. 135.
  Cruel thou art to none besides.
This is how fortune treats me ill;
  This is the luck that me betides.

THE INDEPENDENT LOVER.

I'll turn from her who turns from me,
  I'll show how well I do without her!
My eye shall not her visage see,
  Although it brings me news about her!

Against her e'en my heart I'll close,
  Although for her 'tis always pleading!
Why should my eye take heed of those,
  Who do not think it worth the heeding?

Why should my heart keep people so,
  Who do not think it worth the keeping?
I swear my tears shall never flow
  For one who ne'er for me is weeping!

Why! if my eye should once deceive,
  My very eyelids would not hold it!
And if my heart should make me grieve,
  My ribs would scruple to enfold it!

Unwonted conduct now I try:
  She treats me ill, I treat her sadly.
No wailing lover now am I,
  No sick man sleeping ill and badly.

Say, who will play a friendly part
  In trouble?—such are found but rarely!
Can aught be dearer than my heart?
  And yet in love it floors me fairly!

Can aught be dearer than my eye?
  And yet 'tis evermore displaying
My secret to my enemy,
  And all my hidden love betraying!

QUIET LODGINGS.

P. 136. The poet happened to pass a night in a village, in the course of his travels, at the house of an Armenian.

"'Twas in Armenian that my hostess talked:
  "With your Armenian I have nought to do;
"'Twas not by choice that to your house I walked,
  "For good or ill I don't look up to *you!*

"Night, toil, and travel brought me 'gainst my will;
  "I cannot bear a part of all my woe:—
"Your speech, the water-wheel, the drum, the mill,
  "And which to grumble at I do not know!

"Your speech would of itself be quite enough,
  "Like rocks that pelt about my ears like hail!"
Ah me! my Arabic, thy lot is rough,
  Here is a sad change from thy native vale.
Curse on the steed that brings me here and stops
In such "a valley void of goodly crops."

ON RECEIVING A COPY OF VERSES.

Thy learning sets thee very high;
El Badí' could never vie
With thee in flights of poesy.

I have this mark of thy esteem
In prose and verse. To me they seem
Like pearls that in rich setting gleam.

In learning thou art chief and lord,
And if thou dost but speak a word,
All listen with but one accord.

Beckon, or command or pray,
Be it whatsoe'er it may,
I will hear it and obey.

Lord of kindness manifold! P. 137.
I thy slave am bought and sold
With thy kindness, not with gold.

May I beg thee to excuse
If an answer I refuse?
Thou hast shamed my wretched muse.

PARTING.

Absence, desist! thou seemest my tears to drain.
  Enough, oh Love! thou dost my body wear—
  How long shall I these frequent partings bear?
Oh Absence! wilt thou then for aye remain?
Now at the hand of Parting do I fare
  Full badly, and it doth oppress me sore;
  It ever craveth for me more and more.
Curse him who shewed the place to Absence, where
  I found so safe a refuge heretofore?
My love has left me; how I cannot tell,
  So startled was I at her hurried mien.
She spake most kindly when she said farewell,
  To soothe, if might be, my intense chagrin.
And when *Adieu* had wrought its purpose fell,
Then I returned—but ask not what befell.

Weep, eyes of mine, for many a tear I owe!
  And break, my heart, for loved ones gone away!
  God bless that face! and every dawning day
To greet it from me may the sunshine glow!

Great heavens! renew with every breath of air
  My salutations to my absent love!
  Halt where we parted, and the place will prove
Sweet as though perfume had been sprinkled there.
  And to thy raiment from the fragrant ground
Sweet aromatic particles will cleave;
  Nay! wash the robe, and they shall still be found!
P. 138. My love! I ne'er forget thee; oh! believe
  That love like mine can ne'er thy love deceive.

Thou didst reproach me, but by Heaven I swear!
  Unto our compact I was ne'er untrue;
  Nor was it I who sought for this adieu.
Thou said'st: "I know how ran the whole affair";
  Nay! wrong me not; for nought that e'er I knew
Ran on at all, except these tears I weep!
As thou did'st say: "May'st thou enjoy thy sleep
  "When I am gone!" Alas! can sleep accrue
  To one who hath such dire mishaps to rue?
Waking, I see thee, for thy form doth dwell
  Ever within my heart, mine eye, mine ear!
How can I seek for sleep, who love so well?
  'Tis that I say, perchance thy form so dear
  May at my bedside in my dreams appear!

Thou fillest my bosom with thy love divine,
  And now behold! my bosom brimmeth o'er.
  Perish the heart that brims with love no more!
No place is left within this heart of mine
  For any one but thee, and who, I pray,
  Would seek a shelter where he might not stay?
Ah my fond heart! thus doth it aye incline
  To tender passion;—neither doth it tire,
  Nor yet recover. Mentor, in his ire,
Keeps not a single finger's breadth away,
And I, I cannot yet my finger lay

Upon the height to which I did aspire—
  Upon my loved one! oft does it befall
That lover's hearts are floored by strong desire.
  But never a heart save mine, amongst them all,
  Has ever met with so severe a fall.

AN ADIEU.

To say adieu, I sought the maiden dear;
  "My love," she cried, "and can'st thou thus depart,
"And leave me all alone and sorrowing here?
"Great Heaven, let not this story which I hear
  "Prove true, for terror falls upon my heart
"Thro' this sad news which falls upon my ear!"
Then up she rose, and wept for very woe
Behind the curtain, plucked it with her nail,
And rent the screen that parted us, and lo! P. 139.
Like scattered pearls she let the tear-drops flow
Down from her eyes, and picked them up again
From off the meshes. Then when it was plain
That we indeed must part;—that what was done
  Was not with my consent; then forth she stood,
Revealed before mine eye-sight. Never sun,
  That in the morning pours its radiant flood
Over the Eastern skies, was half so bright.
Then waving recognition with her right,
With her left hand she wiped her streaming eyes;
And still she wept, and I wept on likewise,
Until the ground grew like a marshy field!
  That ground, whereon our tear-drops fell, I ween
A goodly crop of pasturage will yield,
  And ever henceforth will look fresh and green!

THE ABSENT LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

Believe me, my love, when we parted,
'Twas sorely against my own will.
Full long have I yearned broken-hearted
To see thee; I sigh for thee still.
I yielded to love under pressure,
And not for the joy which it gave;
Had I but to consult my own pleasure
I'd ne'er be its slave!

Of the friendship between us subsisting,
I keep every promise and pact;
And the secrets between us existing
Remain unrevealed and intact.
Well, if thou can'st give me up thus gladly,
I too, if it must be confessed,
Can give up—but what and how sadly?—
My sleep and my rest!

Ask the stars in the gloomy night-season,
My piteous plight they'll reveal;
But ask not, I pray thee, the reason,
Nor ask what my heart doth conceal.
But, hark! how the sound of my wailing
From the sides of the Ghor ringeth clear;
Should a man's sense of hearing be failing,
'Twould cause him to hear!

And if ever the lightning comes flashing,
'Tis the fire of my passionate woe!
And if ever the torrent comes dashing,
'Tis the stream of my tears as they flow!

The Ghor has been flooded all over
  This year, so they say; but I ween,
Had I not been so tearful a lover,
  No flood had been seen!

Oh moon! since thy light did forsake me, P. 140.
  Sad and lonely it leaveth mine eyes;
Some evening again thou may'st make me
  More happy by deigning to rise.
Well, I am not the first one to perish
  Of lovers, nor am I alone
Of those who such strong passions cherish
  By absence o'erthrown.

And if God should be pleased to decree me
  Safe conduct, writ down on the page
Of my fate, thou wilt once again see me;
  For e'en if delayed for an age,
As soon as my journey is over,
  No matter how long it may be,
Thou yet shalt behold thy fond lover
  Return unto thee.

THE DESERTED LOVER.

All the world is sad and lonely
  Now the loved one flies.
Moon of mine, oh! tell me only
  When wilt thou arise.
All my soul hath long since perished
  Out of love for thee!
What, oh, soul of mine so cherished!
  Dost thou do to me?

Joyful, if my loved one liveth
  Happy and in health,
This to me of all earth giveth
  Seems sufficient wealth.
Though my love for thee were double,
  'Twere not void of gain;
Though I spent my tears, the trouble
  Were not all in vain.

Should another come to meet me,
  I should never see;
Should another call to greet me,
  Heedless should I be.
Moses, when his mother bore him,
  Was not more forlorn,
E'en though from the breasts they tore him
  Ere he yet was born!

Ah! methinks my love repenteth
  Of her former vow:
Were it not so, what preventeth
  Our reunion now?
Angry was my love's demeanour,
  When I saw her last;
Three whole days I have not seen her,—
  Four have nearly past!

Of our union she doth labour
  To cut through the tie,
And unsheaths the glancing sabre
  Of her beaming eye.
I will bear with her displeasure,
  Cruel though it be,
For mayhap my bosom's treasure
  Will return to me.

Say, my Envoy! I implore thee,
  When thou seek'st her side:
"Straitened is thy swain before thee,
  "Tho' thy grace is wide!"
For a thirst, that ne'er is quenchéd, P. 141.
  In my heart doth lie,
And my cheeks with tears are drenchéd,
  That can ne'er be dry!

My abasement now is moving
  E'en my envier's heart;
Mentor too, no more reproving,
  Pleadeth on my part.
Deem not that it will disgrace me,
  This abasement shown;
Nothing ever could abase me,
  Saving love alone!

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Is it not time for yon bright moon to rise,
  And shed her beams o'er homestead and o'er byre?
Thou'rt gone from me, but only from mine eyes,
  For still I long for thee with strong desire.
Now am I grateful to the love I bear,
  Humiliating though that love may be,
In that it hath ennobled e'en my prayer;
  For when I pray, such tender moods I wear
That all my prayers are humble ones for thee!

My friend! and has that sweet time gone for aye,
  Which erst we passed together, you and I?
"In next Rabí‘[1]," you said, "we meet one day;"
  Rabí‘ after Rabí‘ has since gone by.

[1] The 3rd and 4th months of the Mohammedan year.

Deserter! no more letters can I write;
  My wearied envoys will no longer pass
Between us. Prithee, do not seek to smite
  My heart with censure, for 'tis frail as glass!

I'll weep for thee, and, if no tears I find,
  I'll weep in verses tenderer than they;
Such verses are not scattered to the wind;—
And yet they are—for lo! they leave behind
  A fragrant, odoriferous bouquet!
I love rare beauties both of form and mind,
  And now my poetry on a theme so fair
  From its rare beauty shall be rich and rare.

ENIGMA (ON A LOCK).

P. 142.

A dingy scamp worn thin by frequent scrapes[1],
  His habit stingy, keeping "close" and "near";
'Tis strange that naught his vigilance escapes,
  And yet the rogue has neither eye nor ear.

AN EXHORTATION.

Would'st thou my youthful joys recall,
When I have now renounced them all?
Would'st thou these memories inspire
(When I have ceased to feel desire)
Of things for which as much I mourn
As child from fostering mother torn?
Whereon his web the spider weaves,
And in my breast forgotten leaves.

[1] In the original the pun is on the word برد which means both "cold" and "a file."

Well! if thou would'st my answer hear,
Receive it, in this falling tear.
The newness of my youth has fled,
What wilt thou with the tattered shred?
Nay e'en that tattered shred were dear,
But who shall bid it tarry here!
How oft did I till spring-time bide
With comrades fresh as spring's fair tide,
And put to shame the flowerets fair
With flowers of poetry rich and rare;
And through Youth's night my watches keep,
Aye! watches sweeter far than sleep.
And oft a nightly visit made P. 143.
To many a beauteous, wanton maid,
And journeyed to a monarch high
In rank and power and dignity,
And shared in his commands, that go
Unquestioned both by high and low;
And, though in such position thrust,
Yet never wavered in my trust.
And then I turned from things like those,
And sought a lowly calm repose,
From this and that withheld my soul,
And now farewell unto the whole!
Go! thou who shared my song and wine,
Thy ways are now no longer mine.
Thou dost not the same fashion bear,
Thou dost not that grand garment wear;
When all my hair is turning grey,
Dost thou desire that I should play
The gallant, revelling and gay?
No, no! by Heaven above I vow,
I'll neither heed nor answer now!
If thou returnest when thy hair
Is grey, of my return despair.

How canst thou turn and look behind,
When in the ripe corn plays the wind?
'Twere shame to turn again and roam,
When thou canst see the walls of home!
When even now thou dost alight
Beneath His shade, whose power and might
Will welcome and protect the right!
Nay, brother, it can never be,
Howe'er thou supplicatest me!
For, oh! what grace, what kindness fair,
What righteousness existeth there!
P. 144. Nay, reckon up the whole amount
E'er thou dost open thine account;
And settle how thou shalt descend,
Ere to the summit thou dost wend.

AN INVITATION.

A table spread with viands rare,
  And wine that sparkles in the cup;
And pleasant fellows too are there,
  Who drink the cup of friendship up.

There won't be more than three or four,
  And as to-day 's a holiday,
Come when the Friday-Prayers are o'er,
  And join our party, friend, I pray.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Thou'rt gone, and I am left behind!
No use in living can I find.
The world is all too strait for me,
My arm is strait through losing thee.
For thee I watch the stars above,
Tho' thou regardest not my love.

But still I'll weep for thee, my dear,
In verse so tender and so clear,
That it shall melt into a tear!

DARK OR FAIR.

Thou who art of brunettes so fond,
I cannot side with thee, forsooth; P. 145.
My heart is set on beauties blonde,
For Truth is bright, and 'tis but right
That every one should side with Truth.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Believe me, since we parted, dear,
I've watched and longed for news of thee.
Oh! grant me, then, such news to hear,
For nothing gives such joy to me.

ON BEING REFUSED A FAVOUR.

I sent a favour to obtain,
One very easy to fulfil,
But no concession could I gain,
The mode of asking was so ill.
'Twas like the cup of wine you fill
To cheer the heart, which always will
Mount upwards and confuse the brain.

LINES

P. 146. [On being asked to imitate a well-known poem usually attributed to Taäbbata sharran, and beginning:

Would, oh lost one! I might know
What it was that laid thee low!]

Proud, and oh! how hard beside!
Woe to him who seeks her side.
He was well-nigh slain outright,
Would that she had slain him quite.
When was e'er a gay parterre,
And I plucked not flowerets there!
Where a young and tender tree,
And it would not bend for me!
She is false to every vow,
Yet she seemed not false till now.
There's a bond us twain between,
Ah! and what a bond, I ween!
She is like the moon to see,
Save that ne'er a blur has she.
Yonder branch, that breezes stir,
Learns its wavy grace from her.
Blooms a rose upon her cheek,
Who shall of its beauty speak?
More and more its beauty grows,
Till 'tis like a double rose.
Languid is her eye I ween,
Yet 'tis like a falchion keen.
I am sick, as sick can be,
She alas! is sick of me!

A MESSAGE.

P. 147.

I've a love, and what a love!
She both life and bane doth prove.
From my eyes, alas! she flies,
Whom I looked on as my eyes.
Kiss her hand, oh wind! from me,
Thousands let the kisses be.

ON RECEIVING A LETTER.

Thou, who, though absent from my arms,
Dost yet present me with thy charms,
Thy letter came, but it, alas!
Doth all my eulogies surpass.
For all the joys it doth impart
Felicitate the lover's heart.
To do it honour did I stand,
And kiss the bearer's face and hand.

A PANEGYRIC.

[On 'Alá-ed-dín 'Alí, son of the Emír Shujá'-ed-dín Jeldak et Taḳawí. This, too, is one of the poet's earliest attempts.]

Oh branch! that wavest o'er the Desert sand,
  But for that graceful waving form of thine,
The lover sad and blamed on every hand,
  Had ne'er called thee divine.

And thou, also, thou timid young gazelle!
  But that the many beauties thou dost wear
Resemble those of her we love so well,
  None would thy praise declare.

P. 148.

I love a branch, whose waist is girt around,
  Adore a fawn with ear-rings bright arrayed.
Meseems her eye is bashful; lo! 'tis found
  A bold and cutting blade.

So too the garden of her ruddy cheek;
  Behold! therein a blushing floweret grows.
At first the bud appeareth frail and weak,
  Then blooms a double rose.

Oh, fawn! and wilt thou never glance at me?
  Oh, branch! and towards me wilt thou never sway?
Oh, Love's sure sanctuary! nigh to thee
  Our hearts are stolen away!

Oh! sweet conjunction of her wavy hair,
  Say, is it union that thou dost portend?
Nay! well I know conjunctions everywhere
  To such connexion tend!

Dear friends! my passion since ye went away
  Exceeds your knowledge, though *I* know full well.
Ye have tormented me for many a day
  By love, with purpose fell;

Oh! look more kindly on a lover now,
  Whom longing love hath long time vexed and tried.
It was not tedium, I protest and vow,
  That made me leave your side.

No, 'twas the love to which my heart did lean,
  It was my uncontrollable desire
That drew me then unto 'Alá ed dín,
  Who calleth Jeldak sire,

Lured me unto a prince, whose generous mood
And qualities his eulogist refine;
For they are purer than the limpid flood,
More bright and glad than wine.

Such various virtues, that had they been found
In Hájib, that famed archer long ago,
Nor for a single day, I will be bound,
Had Khindif praised his bow!

Such acts of bounty as he hath performed
Would tie the hands of any Hatim Tye!
Before them Ahnef would become transformed,
And glance with envious eye!

To thee my humble rhymes have shaped their course,
Methinks thou'lt fancy them some gay parterre,
So many a floweret of ornate discourse
Thou mayest gather there.

But were their object to attack thy foe,
(God save the mark!), they'd rankle in his heart,
And prove his badge of ignominy, though P. 149.
They are such gems of art.

And he would broil in hell thereat, although
They are a heaven of loveliness divine:
And drink the cup of everlasting woe,
Whilst they are sweetest wine!

THE FAITHFUL LOVER.

Thy glance is as a falchion keen,
Thy kiss is sweeter far than wine;
And yet thy sword-like glance, I ween,
Deters me not, nor have I been
Well satiate with that kiss of thine!

To gain my ends I face my doom,
  Oh, would the last the first might buy!
Yon rose, that on thy cheek doth bloom,
How fair! yet none may e'er presume
  To cull it, save the wistful eye.

They say that rose is frail to see,
  They know not how I feel its might.
Ah! thou hast made a slave of me,
And who shall come to set me free?
Thou wrongest me, oh! can it be
  That none shall come to set me right?

To thee I stretch my suppliant hand;—
  The God of Love forbid that thou
Should'st e'er in such position stand;—
Rejoicing, though I understand
  That love is my destruction now!

For aye! for aye! I'll keep my troth,
  Though thou thy troth may'st keep or break!
By thy dear life I make my oath,
And, save by that, I am full loth
  An oath or lover's vow to take.

TO AN OLD FRIEND.

P. 150. Dear friends, and is our parting then so nigh?
  Of this I stood in constant dread alway.
Leave me a heart, on which I can rely
  When ye depart, for on that fatal day
My own heart's weakness do I know full well.
  Ah! that mine eye, when ye are gone away,
Might know sweet sleep once more, for who can tell
  But that it might behold in vision fair

The image of the one it loved so well.
  Halt! and bestow upon me, if ye care
To please me, just one single parting glance,
  To soothe a heart well-nigh lost in despair
At losing you.—Come hither, friends, perchance
  We yet may steal a pleasant fleeting hour
From life that doth so rapidly advance;
  We yet, perchance, may cull some fruit or flower
Of union, ere its season brief be o'er;
  And if that vex you, it is in your power
To let me die, and vex yourselves no more.
  Dear friends, where'er ye be, or far or near,
Towards you I yearn, and turn with heart full sore;
  Mine eye it glances at your home so dear,
My heart it mourns those happy days of yore.
  How many a guileless night have we passed here!
Two friends so pure of heart, we could defy
  Suspicion; thoughts of love were cast aside
When we retired together, you and I;
  In us Youth's passion e'en was dignified.
We could enjoy the converse which we loved:
  Nor did we cast a glance at aught beside.
Go! ask the house wherein we lived and moved,
  If what men have alleged of us is true?
It knows full well that I have ever proved
  Too chaste, too well-bred! tell me if it knew
Aught in our converse which could cause us shame?
  Or aught that Modesty would scorn to view?—
Unless (may God forgive us!), I should name
  One trait we had,—the many a pleasant tale,
Ornate and fanciful, we used to frame,—
  You'd think the trees that rustle in the gale P. 151.
Were quivering with delight to hear the sound—
  Soothing as wine to those who would regale!
Curse on that heart wherein no love is found,
  The eye wherein love makes no tears to rise!

I love reputed lovers; on that ground
  They have an increased glory in my eyes.
Love is a virtue in a man; it tends
  To soften all his habits, mollifies
His disposition, gains him rank and friends,
  And to him all its own refinement lends.

SLANDER.

My friend! what is this harshness which I see?
  Where that forbearance which we used of yore?
There's something now about you frightens me,
  Your face is not the face I knew before.
About me tell-tales false reports have spread,
  You heeded them, so they talked on the more.
Methinks you then believed the things they said:—
  Nay, God forbid! yours is too grand a soul.
Before our time folks have been thus misled,
  They said that Jacob raved, and Joseph stole.
For God's sake tell me what it is you've heard,
  For you can tell the truth about the whole;
And if 'tis anything I've said, the word
  May be explained or turned a hundred ways.
Nay, in God's word itself this has occurred,
  And folks have turned and twisted every phrase
Of the Torât[1]. Well! tell-tales, you and I,
  When God on that great day our souls arrays,
Must stand and answer for it if we lie.

[1] The Pentateuch, which Mohammedans declare has been falsified by the Jews and Christians.

ON A LADY OF MODERATE STATURE.

P. 152.

I loved her. Like the young gazelle
  That gazes o'er the plain, she had
A lustrous eye, and lids as well
  With long and silky lashes clad.

Those envious of her beauty said,
  "She's rather delicate and wee."
They've spoken truth upon that head,
  For delicate and fair is she.

For this they care not to refute
  The loveliness she doth possess,—
They know there can be no dispute
  At all about her loveliness.

A girl of wondrous beauty, soft
  And captivating qualities;
Of gentle beauty though it oft
  Doth blind and dazzle mortal eyes.

In temper and in character
  She is not harsh or cruel—no!
Far be it from a maid like her
  A harsh or cruel mood to show.

That she is not of stature tall,
  I hold no detriment to be,
Since she, it seems, possesses all
  A lover could desire to see.

As for my own especial taste,
  I dearly love each beauteous maid
By whom a graceful slender waist
  And fair proportions are displayed.

EPIGRAM.

[On a Governor dismissed from his Province.]

They turned him out for roguery,
And very sad he seemed to be.
Says he, "When things like that befall,
"No grief e'er comes to me at all."
Say we: "You lie, grief comes to you,
"And you have come to grief, sir, too!"

P. 153.

ON A PRETTY GIRL.

I love her, with her waist so slight;
Its slightness has enslaved me quite.
The fairest of God's creatures, none
Can praise her as it should be done.
There is a beauty in her face,
Which shows each day some novel grace;
Her beauty, seen but yesterday,
Appears another kind to-day.
And oh, the sweetness of her lip!
Which I, alas! may never sip.
'Twould seem that on her mouth divine
Were honey mingled up with wine.
So small it is that one would say,
An *I* would thence come out a *J*![1]

THE WORLD.

Ah! thou noble soul of mine,
'Tis a corpse that world of thine:
Never bird that yet I saw
With it satisfied its maw.

[1] In the original the letters cited are ا *alif* and د *dal*.

Let a very tiny sip
Be sufficient for thy lip,
For the wits of men are weak,
When for worldly things they seek.
Ah! how happy is the wight
Unto whom its load is light.
Tyrant, wilt thou ever wrong
Other men who are not strong! P. 154.
Spendthrift, must thou always spread
Butter on thy daily bread!
Reckless one, dost never look
At the heading of the book!
Proud one, boast not in thy pride,
Though thy velvet be so wide!
Wretch, supposing thou shouldst be
Lord of all that thou canst see!
Will thy power or worldly store
Ever drive Death from thy door.
Thou shalt leave it all, and not
After death possess a jot.
Why dost thou neglect thy load
On so perilous a road?
Make provision while there's breath,
"There's no Kúfa after death[1]!"

A PETITION.

[To the Sulṭán el Melik en Náṣir, Yúsuf, son of Mohammed ibn el Ghází 'bn Aiyúb.]

Thy conduct is most noble and refined;
Thy character most generous and kind.
Thy goodness, mildness, faith, I can perceive,
Yet dost thou rise o'er all I can conceive.
By Heaven! my love for thee is pure indeed,—
By Heaven! to swear it I have little need!

[1] A well-known town on the Hajj, or pilgrim route to Mecca, where pilgrims replenish their stores.

To thee I feel I cannot e'er complain,
I try to do so—then shrink back again.
P. 155. Thy goodness to me other men design
To mar;—far be it from goodness such as thine.
Ne'er have I known detraction up to now,
And one like thee will surely not allow
Detraction in the case of one like me;
But, if against it thou my guard should'st be,
Such a position will thenceforth be mine
That I shall scorn each rival's dark design.
Yet, but for things I do not care to name,
I should avoid complaint—nay, turn with shame.
For well I know I hold a place with thee,
Which all my life a help and aid will be.
And Hope gives presage of thy favouring glance,
That shall for me the whole world's joy enhance.
Nor is it too much to expect that thou
Wilt soon renew the grace I had ere now.
While thou art left me, nought for wealth care I,
Thy bounteous kindness will the want supply.
I would keep up my honour, nothing more,
For nought beside it is my heart so sore.
For, thank God! mine's a spirit most reserved,
It ne'er complains nor sighs when badly served;
Glory and lordship are its proudest store,
The sword and scriptures are its noblest lore!
But then—my little children and my wives—
And none but me to tend or cheer their lives!
I dread the very breeze that o'er them blows,
My fondness for them fills my heart with throes,
My joy is when they seem in happy case,
My grief, when misery stares them in the face;
God's grace and Yúsuf's I have made their store,—
While Yúsuf's Yúsuf, they shall want no more!
P. 156. I grieve my verse when of distress I sing,
As though imposing some unwonted thing.

Erst 'twas accustomed to each playful strain,
Whereat men's hearts were crazed with amorous pain.
In playful strains its brilliancy shines clear,
In plaintive lays its hardest tasks appear.
As for my verse: rest for the soul is there,
Ease for the heart, and driving off of care.
There the Fawn meets thee—Fawn with lustrous eyes,
There the Branch greets thee—Branch of slenderest size.
Yes! I bewailed—excessive grief and care
Caused by my love for many a heartless fair—
Wept one who, nigh, capricious tricks would play,
Or one who cared not for me while away.
Now I complain; but then complaint to thee
Is no disgrace, though irksome aye to me.
To thee, Ṣaláh-eddín, my tale's addressed;
Whate'er thy pleasure, sire, 'tis for the best.

A TETRASTICH.

[In imitation of the Persian *dú-beit*, or Quatrain.]

Oh! thou who art at once my bosom's life and bane,
To thee, in hopes of aid, of love do I complain.
The eye that looks on thee, what honour doth it gain!
The soul that knows thy love, what grace doth it attain!

ON A YOUNG MAN GROWING A BEARD. P. 157.

Now is his face all fringed with hair,
He who was such a saucy lad.
Once was his childish face so fair,
Now it has lost what grace it had.

Pray Heaven to bless this eye of mine,
That never could gaze enough! I said;
And Heaven be praised for that beard so fine,
That makes his face like the back of his head!

THE SPENDTHRIFT.

[Playfully written in the name of one of the Poet's friends, a Bagdad merchant, who came to Cairo and after a few years' residence there spent all that he possessed.]

I came to Cairo with a store
  Of wealth,—my story's known enough;
Full twenty loads of silk I bore,
  And ditto of half-cotton stuff.
And such a lot of lovely pearls,
  And gems and jewels all refulgent;
I'd Turkish slaves too, boys and girls,
  So neat with beauty quite effulgent.

And then my hand I opened wide,
  And paid in measure grand and fine;
And ever gathered to my side,
  A ringlet and a cask of wine!
I never ceased to make a friend,
  I never left off making merry;
P. 158. I'd comrades too, who in the end
  My business settled nicely—very!

And every day I had a tray,
  With kid and lamb upon it dressed,
Until I'd sold or given away
  Each valuable that I possessed.
And soon the sale e'en swallowed down
  My rug and blanket in a minute,
All this I spent in Cairo's town,
  Before I'd spent my last day in it.

And, after all, I've come to be
  A reckless pauper in the place
Where once I lived so merrily,
  So rich and in such happy case.

And now at last the time has come
To leave the town—I cannot do less;
And I must trudge away towards home
Thus hungry, thirsty, bare, and shoeless.

ABSENCE.

Earth seems too strait thro' fear of losing thee;
What place is not strait unto one in fear?
I but regret the time when thou wert near;
Nought else but that can raise regrets in me.

ON RECEIVING A LETTER.

I got thy letter which such favours bore.
That sheets of paper could contain the sea,
Was what had not occurred to me before.
I thank thy kindness, and I long to see
That kindly face of thine, dear friend, once more.

A PANEGYRIC.

[On the Sultan el Melik es Ṣálih, Nejm eddín Aiyúb, brother of the Sultan el Melik el Mesúd Ṣaláh eddin Yúsuf, son of el Melik el Kámil. Written in the year 622 A.H. = 1226 A.D.] P. 159.

The flattering glance of her beaming eye
Promised an interview by and by.
The bane of my heart are the words that fly
From eyelids speaking clearly.
I love all beauty where'er 'tis found,
I dote on the branch so sleek and round,
And I love the ringlet twining around
The back of a fair one, dearly.

For such back is like a desert hill,
Whereon is a snake coiled up and still.—
You have heard of me, Mentor—perchance you will
Turn kinder or pity me merely!

Had you but been where you might see
Us twain together, my love and me,
You'd know how quietude's robe could be
Tattered in ruthless fashion.
You'd know the pleasure that lovers gain,
E'en when they mutually complain;
And you'd wonder how any one could remain
A day without love or passion.
What! have these Mentors the wish expressed
That I without her may learn to rest?
Nay! by her life, for mine's a breast
Too full of sweet compassion.

Scold or threaten or storm as they may,
I'll never leave her or turn away,
Yet, in her presence the more I stay,
The more disturbed I'm growing.
So is a necklace ne'er at rest,
When it is hung on a fair maid's breast;
She makes me restless, yet I protest
My gratitude I'm shewing.
So, if a pod of musk you take
Into your hands, and braise and break,
Sweeter perfume the musk will make,
Its grateful odours throwing.

Thou who dost slay me with cruel wrong,
Still is my love for thee as strong.
Thou who forsakest me, I long,
I long to see thee sadly.

There is a band of men who say
I am consoled when thou'rt away.
May they all perish, oh Lord, I pray!
For oh! I love thee madly.
All that my Mentors now expect
Is that, through fear of thy neglect,
I shall shew them some slight respect,
And fawn upon them gladly.

But if ever I've promised thine image bright, P. 160.
Seen but in visions of the night,
To meet it in slumber however light,
Bear witness that I was lying!
Why is that heart of thine no more
Quite the same heart it was before?
For 'twas a friend to me of yore,
So kindly and complying.
Thy cheek, methinks, it enjoys the woe
I feel at our being parted so,
For I looked on it at the time, and lo!
'Twas flushed there's no denying.

I've striven Ambition's heights to gain,
Striven with all my might and main,
'Till none could reach me or e'er attain
To my exalted station.
I've journeyed by night when it has seemed
That even the stars that o'er me beamed,
With envious eyes upon me gleamed,
To watch my destination.
At length I reached a Monarch's hall,
One at whose feet all monarchs fall
In suppliant guise and humbly call,
Each for his daily ration.

Now on the King of the Age I wait,
In a position so high and great,
The heart of the Era would palpitate
If in my station dwelling.
Begone! ye stars in heaven that shine,
For now the Star of the Faith[1] divine
Hath beamed on me with light benign,
Your feebler radiance quelling.
The Righteous[1] one, the King[1] whose reign
Did for his age such glory gain,
That 'mongst the ages it doth attain
A rank the rest excelling.

A King in whose house from sire to son
Kingly traditions unbroken run;
Ne'er was a patent like his, not one
With all the proud old races.
Everything, e'en to his people's eyes,
Awestruck and prostrate before him lies;
Seest thou not how they dare not rise,
Whenever he towards them faces?
Spacious, I ween, is his open hall,
Goodly and rich are his dwellings all,
Sadír's grand hall, and Khawarnaḳ's wall,
Their glory he effaces.

Mirth is sadness save at his side,
Livelihood scant from all beside.
Oh! thou who art ever thy client's pride,
And the glory of each relation.
The kindly acts which in him we see,
From ostentation are ever free,
In his good nature there ne'er can be
The smallest affectation.

[1] El Melik es Ṣálih, Nejm eddín signifies "The Righteous King, the Star of the Faith."

He calls all comers who pass his way, P. 161.
Unto his wealth, and, one might say,
He calls down on it a curse, for they
Effect its dissipation!

His chargers neigh for the fight from afar,
Arrayed and ready for it they are.
His host it revels when in the war
His prowess high he sheweth.
His lance doth dance, and his sabre rings,
In his coat of mail like a lion he springs,
In the thick of the fray,—most strange of things,—
A fair full moon he gloweth.
His spears he watereth with the gore
Of slaughtered foemen o'er and o'er,
And a crop of heads, full many a score,
Upon the tops there groweth.

Though he leave, there precedeth his army apace,
An army that choketh up time and space[1],
He filleth all hearts, through his might and his grace,
With fear and love competing.
His chargers, they range o'er hill and dale,
His troops, they are seen in every vale.
Hail! thou whose rule is resistless, hail!
E'en "The Loiterer[2]" would haste at thy greeting.
Hail! thou of all monarchs on earth the best,
Thou nobler far than all the rest
Of those to whom camels have onward pressed
With envoys all keen for a meeting.

Hail to thee, monarch, o'er and o'er!
Thou who, by scattering wide thy store,
Makest thy people's hearts the more
Calm and more collected!

[1] i. e. An army of fears inspired by his name and reputation.
[2] A little star in the wake of the Pleiades.

Thanks to the justice of thy reign,
No one oppressed doth now remain,
Thanks to thy bounty, none sues in vain,
Or finds his wants neglected.
Whom thou didst call for, I am he,
And this my praise and my eulogy
Now hath responded unto thee
With quickness unexpected.

Now have I found a market rare
For every quality good and fair;
Now have I known that virtue there
As current coin he taketh.
Thou! who if ever he threaten a foe
With speedy vengeance, one well may know,
Judging from what his bounties shew,
His word he never breaketh.
P. 162. Thou! who since first he crossed my ken,
I spurned all others of mortal men,
'Till I scarce reckoned them creatures then,
Whom God Almighty maketh.

For thee, in Cairo my camels I've bound,
While others from East to West go round,
Halting with thee a castle I've found,
One of such strong position,
That Márid and Ablak[1] there might go
For refuge. And after this all may know
That I shall be unsurpassed, I trow,
In the race of high ambition:
But I have got what is not given to each
Of them, and I speak beyond their speech,
And I reach likewise beyond their reach
In every competition.

[1] Two celebrated Arabian fortresses.

A PANEGYRIC

[On es Ṣahib Ṣafiy eddín Abu Mohammed 'Abd alláh, commonly called Ibn Shukr.]

Of constant love I took from her a bond,
Nor at her teasing grew my heart less fond.
Methought a dream sometimes her form might take,
But lest it should, she keeps me aye awake.
My heart through love's in a *dependent* state,
As these tears *absolutely predicate.*
I grew enamoured of her lustrous eyes,
And waist so delicate in form and size;
Sweeter than any fair young fawn is she,
Straighter and slenderer than a fair young tree.
And through my longing for her mouth and lip,
To soothe my soul Naḳá's sweet fount I sip;
But for the lightnings from her brow that blaze,
I'd ne'er watched lightnings or sung *Abraḳ's*[1] praise.
I needs must see her, and my need is dire,—
Part sprung from piety, part from desire.
Nay, my two friends[2]! blame not a lover, pray,
Who sings of love and of a bygone day.
Deem not my heart consoled, as ye would say,
Deem not my tears, as ye think, wiped away! P. 163.
That heart has learnt but to persist the more,
Those tears have learnt but with more force to pour.
Must I still sue one chary of her love?
The fear of parting must I ever prove?
Too much my breast has felt of love and woe!
Too much my eyes of tears and waking know!

[1] The name of a place signifying "rough gravelly soil," but connected in sound with a root meaning "flashing," "lightning."

[2] This is in imitation of the ancient Arab poets, who always addressed in their poems two imaginary camel-drivers, who were supposed to accompany them in their visit to the deserted camp of the beloved.

Ah, with each year in endless cycles born,
Some joy doth perish, some new garb grow worn!
Thou canst not see a friend void of deceit,
No faithful comrade can one ever meet.
His friendship is not given with a zest,
His gratulation's flattery at the best.
My drawback has been literary taste,
Betwixt success and me a trench is placed;
But, with the favouring glance of Ṣáhib great,
I ne'er shall suffer any harm from fate.
If that Vizier's bright brow thou dost perceive,
The cloud whence lightning flashes thou may'st leave.
When I met him, the rain clouds I despised,
Their free and copious shower no more I prized.
I found a court from whence one might ascend
To glory, which will comfort and defend
Those who in hope or fear may thither wend.
Saying *'Abd Allah*[1], if to him referred,
All charms and spells are centred in the word.
From all of Fortune's ills 'twill keep you free,
Safe from each unexpected casualty.
P. 164. How many a book have I, which thou didst write
To make the face of Jurisprudence bright;—
O'er which I've pored, its science to enjoy,
And learned the eloquence I now employ!
How many a bard doth come thy fame to praise
And with *thy* language beautify his lays;
If aught sound fair, this in thy garden grew—
If aught taste sweet, this from thy lake they drew.
Long may'st thou hear thy praises sung, in strains
To lead Ferazdaḳ and Jerír in chains;
Yet they would have no loveliness for me,
Though molten gold or picked pearls they should be:

[1] 'Abd allah, "the servant of God," was the familiar name of the subject of the panegyric. The name of Allah, like the ineffable name of Jehovah or Yahveh with the Jews, is reckoned by the Muslims as the most potent of spells.

Not if they sped on like the Zephyr fair,
Not if like flowerets in a sweet parterre:—
But that the letters of thy name are there,
Clothing them all with beauty bright and rare!

A FAREWELL TO EGYPT.

Must I leave Egypt where such joys abound?
  What place can ever charm me so again?
What! leave a country where the very ground
  Is sweeter scent than perfume jars contain.

How can I? when it is a paradise
  "With rugs and pillows spread," like Eden above;
A land whose beauty charms both heart and eyes,
  Where saints and sinners find what best they love,

With trusty friends whom virtue doth unite,
  Whose meeting-places are like gardens fair.
Dwellers in Egypt! though farewell! I write,
  Our vows of friendship are as erst they were.

Yet to the breeze breathe not the vows we swore,
  Such things it from the garden steals away.
Say, shall mine eyes with tears be ever sore? P. 165.
  Shall parting agitate my heart for aye?

Lo! every day I have fresh cause to sigh,
  In every land I have an absent friend;
Well, better times will come round by and by,—
  Why to anticipate them should I wend?

My nature is that I am fond in love,
  After lost dear ones lingers long my sight;
Mine eye fills at each bird within the grove,
  My love lights up at lightning in the night.

I ne'er yet left a spot on earth, I swear,
  But at its name my tears would haste to flow.
But literature consoles me everywhere,
  Making a home for me where'er I go.

For poetry still I like a lover long,
  All else, alas! has been divorced from me.
And every hearer revels in my song,
  Secluded dames adore my poesy.

My song needs no accomplished singer's tone,
  'Tis its own Ma'bed and Makhárik sweet;
There all may find a love-song of their own,
  Which all and every of their moods shall meet.

The toper sings it, 'tis a merry strain;
  The Ṣúfí chants it, 'tis a mystic trill;
By it the suppliant his desire may gain,
  The lover turn the loved one to his will.

Yet do I blame it for one grievous wrong,
  To it the parting camel speeds away.
Not to gain guerdon do I sing my song,
  But I am clad in virtue's rich array:
Shall I beg God's bread from a soul beside?—
Beg from mankind when God doth all provide?

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

P. 166.
God yet may grant us to meet again;
  We yet may foregather together once more.
Then will I tell to you all the pain,
  All the distress which in absence I bore.
Satisfied then my thirst shall be;—
  For letters can never my longing hold.

I've treasured a tale in my heart for thee,
Which when we meet shall be fully told.
Then will I chide thee for all my pain,
But the chiding will cease, and the love remain.

BROKEN VOWS.

Tell me, where is that firm vow
Which we made in times of yore?
Thou hast not forgotten now
All our ties of heretofore.

Such a beauteous face as thine
Never can an ingrate be!
Like morn thou to our eyes dost shine,
But oh! thy conduct choketh me[1].

Thou said'st thou would'st a visit pay,
And since then I have ever gone
With eyes fixed firmly on the way,
And wept from sunset unto dawn.

Oh! would I had an eye that knew
The sweets of slumber;—it would seem
Sufficient happiness to view
Thine image even in a dream.
Oh! happy time when we could meet,
For 'twas a time both fair and sweet.

[1] There is a pun here which it is impossible to translate, the same word meaning "to shine" and "to choke."

A BEGGING LETTER.

P. 167. [Written to the poet by the Illustrious Premier, Jemál eddín Yaḥyá 'bn Maṭrûh, asking him for a box of writing paper and some ink.]

Without a scrap, whereon to write,
Of paper I am bankrupt quite;
So send a little case as white
As your own reputation bright.
And if there comes with it some ink,
I'll welcome both, for I shall think
Fair cheeks and eye-balls meet my sight!

REPLY TO THE ABOVE.

[The writer of the lines just quoted had ingeniously written a letter ambiguously, so that (by reading "scrap," "scrip;" and "case," "cash,") his note was also made to hint that he was out of cash as well as paper. The poet sent the articles requested, accompanied by the following lines:]

I've sent your order off all right,
Paper and ink wherewith to write.
But one thing I'm unable quite
To send—that which with pen and ink
You indicate and seem to think
Is like fair cheeks and eye-balls bright!

A NIGHT-RIDE.

A troop like stars, on stars astride,
Rode out across the desert wide.
They rode along at night-fall late;
Each swayed as if intoxicate.
Until the daylight, like a stream,
Flowed in and drowned the moon's pale beam.
Urged by our love our camels strode,
While we with tales beguiled the road.

ON AN ABSENT FRIEND.

My life for his! whose loss I cannot bear, P. 168
With whom I have a more than brother's tie;
When he has gone, about me still I stare,
And follow every pathway with mine eye.

TO A PATRON.

My lord! thou, at whose bounty's door
Men ever knock unceasingly;
I've sought thee twice at least, or more,
But never found a way for me.

ON AN OLD NEGRO.

I know an old darkie of eighty odd years,
His face is grown piebald with hoary old age;
His beard is so white and so round, he appears
Like the ruffle-necked eagle one sees in a cage!

THE CALIPH OF LOVE.

[A mystical poem.]

O'er Lovers' heads my standard waves on high,
Under my guidance marcheth all that band.
Out of my road Love's awe-struck votaries fly;
His purpose swerves who dares against me stand!

I march a march in Love none marched before
Of all the Lovers that on earth are found.
My missionaries range on every shore;
Throughout the ends of earth my drums resound.

P. 169. Lovers around my dais take their place
Beneath my roof, each in his love's degree;
Love's coinage bears my name upon its face,
And Lovers' pulpits give forth prayers for me.

"Enough was left for all within the glass,
"Alone I drank up what that glass contained."
Ne'er till well-drunk do I the goblet pass;
Ah! would I knew what liquor I have drained.

In love I am of delicacy rare,
Of gentle nature and of thoughts refined;
I love the beautiful, the gay, the fair,—
Aye! all that's lovely amongst all mankind.

Ne'er to a friend have I a traitor proved;
I'm pointed at with wonder in the street.
My mood and temper do I keep unmoved,
Aye! though I die through the rebuffs I meet.

Fair is the speech in which of Love I sing,
Where now are they whose hearts can be impressed?
Never in Love did I claim anything,
But that both worlds did my deserts attest.

And in the hearers' ears, like jewelled rings,
Ringeth my song in many a pearlèd note;
And the grand cordon of my order clings—
Its noblest ornament—round every throat!

A WELCOME.

Welcome! guest, who cometh here;
Welcome! to a friend beloved;
Welcome! to a comrade dear,
Welcome! a companion proved.

By my father's life be saved!
  Thou from grief hast made me free.
Kindly hast thou now behaved
  To the friend who longed for thee. P. 170.

Would my cheek had been the ground
  All thy way along the street!
I thy footsteps' dust have found
  Sweeter far than musk most sweet.

From my longing after thee
  On a blazing fire am I;
Dry my eyes can never be,
  But my throat is ever dry!

Of recovery I despair
  From this fit of drunken love;
And my heart can never bear
  All the ills it has to prove.

A LAMENT FOR EGYPT.

Alas! for Union's bygone tide,
  When mirth was unconstrained and free;
When in the garb of youthful pride
  I strutted on so jauntily!
Oh! happy time in Cairo passed,—
However long my life may last,
  I'd gladly give it up for thee!

When still in fair Fosṭáṭ remained
  That moon who mourned my parting sore;
That moon for whom, alas! I've drained
  The cup of parting o'er and o'er;
For whom my very blood I drain;
Why therefore should I now restrain
  These tears which in such torrents pour?

My friends! what past and present pain
Has cruel absence wrought for me!
P. 171. Did ye but look across the plain,
Towards Cairo, ye would plainly see
The bright flames of my ardour rise.
My soul with anguish heaves and sighs
All quenchless, though, alas! my eyes
Are quenched with weeping ceaselessly!

Away from thee no rest was mine,
Not e'en when free to go or stay;
Until one night thy form benign
In dreams a visit deigned to pay.
Beside me on the couch it slept,
While Night its sombre curtain kept
Let down upon the world alway!

And ah! the happy night I passed
'Twixt fond embrace and dreamy kiss;
Until I lay awake at last,
Arousing from my dream of bliss.
But in my robe a perfume rare
Still lingered, where that form so fair
Had left her perfumed trace, I wis!

Those tell-tales now at length have seen
Mine's not a brazen face like theirs;
It never has my nature been
To play folks false in love-affairs.
I weep, but not with vain pretence,
But weep in words whose gentle sense
The semblance of pure tear-drops wears.

For none, I ween, can ever tell
  If lips let fall this song of mine,
Or if from streaming eyes it fell,
  They are so gentle and so fine,
And sweetness lives in gentle things.—
Egyptian songs your poet sings,
  Whose words with 'Irák's modes combine.

DESPAIR.

May'st thou live and long remain, P. 172.
I am he whom Love hath slain!
Light of my eyes, I pray that thou
May'st never feel what I feel now!
Ah well! my past is past and gone:
None lasteth good but God alone.
Between my death and loss of thee,
No difference at all I see.
Thou freest of mankind from care,
How long through thee must I despair?
I've heard things of thee;—Lord! I pray
There be no truth in what they say.
Our compact thou would'st never break,
When such firm hold on thee I take!
In thee I never used to find
Aught but the kindest of mankind.
Oh, master! gently now with me!
Oh, master! treat me courteously!
Long life to thee, and as for me
I die of love, undoubtedly!
There's little now of me that's left,
And I of that shall be bereft.

A REMONSTRANCE.

Dear friends! may God forbid that ye
  Should any spite or anger show.
Dear friends! may his end speedy be,
  Who ever dared annoy you so.

P. 173.

This is coquetry on your part;
  Oh! leave it till we meet once more.
By Heaven! I never did depart
  From what I used to be before.

And to the veil of union sweet
  I ne'er have ceased to cling as yet.
Alas! for what my heart doth meet
  From you, and what erewhile it met!

If ye will not bestow your love
  Upon me, tell my heart the news.
Ah me! what pangs of shame I prove,
  When towards me such reproach ye use.

Aye! very nearly drowned am I
  In tears and drippings from my brow!
What can I do against a lie,
  If you believe the teller now?

In such a strait as this, I pray,
  How can my argument proceed;
Uncertain as I am which way
  To take, or where the road may lead?

Shall not your envoy come back soon,
  With beaming face once more to me?
Thou dost enslave with many a boon,—
  Nay rather, thou dost set me free.

When one like thee my friend I deem,
  Is this my mood, and this my plight?
Why! had I seen it in a dream,
  I would not have believed my sight!

A LETTER.

[When Behá eddín had composed the preceding lines, they brought to his mind some P. 174. others in a similar metre which he had composed in his youth, but which he could not exactly recall, not having thought much of them at the time. They were addressed to one of his friends, and ran as follows :]

In haste have I this letter closed,
  Amid distress of every kind;
The wonder is 'twas e'er composed
  By one so discomposed in mind.

To look at it, it seems as though
  I trembled, stumbling as I wrote,
The parts of it are mixed up so,
  There is no order in the note.

Three things therein appear as one,
  The lines, the paper, and the ink.
The lines in such disorder run,
  They've hardly strength to walk, you'd think.

The ink's as black as any slough,
  Which on the miry road you see.
The paper, true, is white enough,
  But only white, like leprosy!

However, it does testify
  That flattery is not present there;
I don't deceive you with a lie
  Dressed up in words of seeming fair;
With specious phrases to adorn
An inside that is worn and torn.

ON A BRUNETTE.

P. 175. Brunettes, not blondes, as I shall prove,
Are far the worthiest of our love:
Think over it impartially,
And you'll, I'm sure, agree with me.
Maid's lips a dusky colour wear,
While white's the hue the leprous bear.

TRUTH IN ABSENCE.

Your slave his deep obeisance makes
Unto his master, and he takes
The liberty to mention this,
How very great his longing is.
His absence changes but his frame,
His heart sincere remains the same.
Then weep for that poor loving wight
Whose collar Absence graspeth tight.

A PETITION.

Mohammed! kindness is innate with thee,
I give thee joy of the good fame it beareth;
I call on thee as one in certainty
That he will gain what he to ask thee dareth.

Thou hast accustomed me to bounties rare,
As thou hast all who seek for thy protection;
Search, then, my heart, thou wilt find no one there
To share with thee in its sincere affection.

P. 176. This is my tale, told with an honest mind;
Ask thine own mind, it will confirm my story.
Why should not hopes in thee fruition find,
When thou hast such a sire in whom to glory?

When of thy gifts the story-tellers tell,
  The sea's thy slave, I will not say thy brother!
I sing to rouse thy pride, yet know full well
  It needs not to be roused like any other.

And if thy promise thou should'st carry out,
  'Twas just for that I have watched observant;
If thou forgettest—which I greatly doubt—
  Others, but not thou, may forget a servant.

ON A GIRL NAMED MALÚK[1].

A maiden fair, who never knew
  The taste of love except my own;
Nor spoiled her own affection true,
  By favours to a rival shown—

She asked me of the depth and strength
  Of passion she inspired in me.
"And is it not," said I at length,
  "Enough that thus I die for thee?"

Once, in a merry sportive fit,
  She called me "brother;" then I said,
"Ah! thou hast spoiled the little wit
  "That dwelt within thy brother's head!"

I've left the love, long time ago,
  Of every one for love of thee;
Ah! would that some one whom I know
  Had only left thee unto me.

They saw thee, and exclaimed aloud,
  "The moon, the mound, the waving bough!"
'Tis very obvious that the crowd
  Do not yet know thee even now.

[1] See page 73.

Ah, by thy life! thou erred'st then,
  When thou didst do such wrong to me;
For in their similes have men
  Done such a grievous wrong to thee!

Yet all the wrong thou didst to me
  Was saying "he loves no longer"—no!—
Could one like me cease loving thee?—
  No! by thy father! 'tis not so.

Full many a king and queen are there,
  Throughout the whole wide world, I ween;
But ne'er a one is half so fair
  As my Malúk—my bonnie "quean."

AN ETRENNE.

P. 177.

Alas! I've nothing else to give,
  Except a life by thee possessed.
'Tis at its last gasp, but may live
  If with a sight of thee 'tis blessed!

AN ELEGY.

[On his son.]

Thou wert forewarnéd not to stray
  From the safe paths of right and truth;
  And thou didst taste of love and youth,
What surely might suffice for aye.

Long hast thou journeyed through the night
  Of youth, in sport and follies passed;
  And now that morning comes at last,
Thy journey brings thee scant delight.

Well! be not troubled, nor repine,
  If e'er there come an evil day;
  Or if thou e'er repinest, pray
What profiteth such act of thine?

That evil day how canst thou blame,
  Which by its very coming shows
  Who are thy friends and who thy foes,
Distinguishing what seemed the same?

My soul for his a ransom be,
  For whom my very soul doth melt!
  Oh heart of mine! now hast thou felt
What thine own hands have wrought for thee!

Thou hadst no need of love at all,
  But right from wrong thou didst not know;
  Though Love hath brought thee pain and woe,
Thou answerest its every call.

Leave, oh my heart! thy former ways,
  Thy friend is false thou canst not doubt.
  Hereat my life is gasping out,
Hereat mine eye on death doth gaze.

Thou'rt gone, who wert like life to me;
  How can I bear my life to leave?
  How couldst thou go? Didst thou believe P. 178.
That I had any one but thee?

Thou didst bid me a long farewell,
  But thou hadst ne'er accustomed me
  To have to say "farewell" to thee,
That I might learn to bear it well.

But as I knew thee long ago,
  Thou couldst not bear to leave my side;
  Oft hast thou, in thy love, defied
All those who would have said thee no.

How is thy nature altered now?
  And who is it hath turned thee so?
  Thou canst not make excuses—no!
All others may, but never thou.

To leave me thou didst not incline
  Of thine own free-will, but alas!
  This evil that hath come to pass
Is of Death's doing, not of thine.

Our parting was by Fate's decree;
  We did not seek it, I and thou.
  Would thou wert left unto me now,
Though all men should thy ransom be!

This thing is hard for me to bear,
  That whensoe'er I turn my face,
  And search in thy accustomed place,
Alas! I do not find thee there.

I have not seen, nor do I see
  In any one, a nature fair,
  Nor qualities so fine and rare,
As those I saw adorning thee.

Upon thy love a seal I set
  Within my soul, and it doth stay
  Within the self-same place alway,
And with the seal unbroken yet.

The hand of Death, devoid of ruth,
  Hath struck thee down with too much haste,
  Ere thou hadst even time to taste
The full enjoyment of thy youth.

Alas! that loveliness of thine,
  That it should fade away. Alas!
  That e'er it should so quickly pass,
The grace wherein thou erst didst shine!

Alas! how shall I ever dare
  To boast my faith and truth again,
  When thou hast suffered grief and pain,
Which grief and pain I did not share?

Thou diest, yet I do not die
  Of grief for thee. Then, by thy love,
  To love do I a traitor prove.
Ah me what sense of shame have I?

When people name me as thy friend!
  A friend how could I ever be,
  Who, when misfortune came on thee,
Therein did no assistance lend?

'Tis true I notice that the friends P. 179.
  Who weep with me are not a few;
  But he, who weeps with sorrow true,
Is not like him who but pretends.

Oh thou! who hast proposed to take
  A journey far, so far, away,—
  When wilt thou come back to me, say,
From this long journey thou didst make?

God recompense thee well, I pray—
  Alas! too well I know that He
  Full recompence hath granted thee
For aught that I could do or say!

Oh Tomb! wherein my dear one lies,
  How very gladly would I bear
  The dust that holds that form so fair,
Aye, even on my very eyes!

Upon thee may the rain-drops fall
  In copious showers; but should they be
  Too scant, the tears I shed for thee
Will irrigate thee more than all!

And may my greeting never cease
  To mingle with the pure soft air,
  And visit oft the dwelling where
My own beloved one lies at peace.

TO A PATRON.

Thou art my lord; long mayst thou be,
Thou best of masters! spared to me.
Everything I see that's fair,
I long for it with thee to share.

And, in every state, I'll prove
Always mindful of your love.
Though I gave my soul away,
Not e'en then could I repay
The leniency thou dost display.

LAUS DEO.

O Lord! I hope Thy grace to win;
  Thy mercies, Lord! how great are they!
How clement art Thou to my sin;
  How merciful to me alway!

AN OFFER.

P. 180.

I am he "whom thou dost own,
  "With all I own or ever had."
If of it all one thing alone
  Should suit thee, sir, I should be glad.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

'Tis high time, thou absent one,
That mine eye thy form should see;
I have wished or longed for none
In the whole wide world but thee.

I am pleased with thee; but, then,
Would I had thy pleasure gained.
I'd have spared all other men,
So that thou hadst but remained.

Absent from thee I repine
Worse than at unkindness nigh.
Would the lot were only mine
With the last the first to buy!

THE LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

Woe is thee! did I not tell thee, heart of mine, P. 181.
That thou shouldst not for a mortal frail repine?
Thou hast stirred Love's fire that slumbered until now;
Nought to cause and much to hinder that had'st thou!
I've a love who never leaves a single course
That could please my foes, but such she treads perforce!
She has got a hold upon me,—would that she
Held me dearer, or were kinder unto me!
Who, I prithee, oh her fair cheek's ruddy glow!
Bit thee, who has bled thee, who has flushed thee so?
Thou Narcissus eye of hers! thou drink'st thy fill
At my heart's blood, yet how drooping art thou still!
Thee too! honeyed draught upon her ruby lip,
I am jealous that the *miswák*[1] e'en should sip!

[1] See note to page 51.

Thou too! oh her graceful stature's waving tree—
Blessed be God who formed thee in such symmetry!
Mayst thou ne'er appear a traitor to me, ne'er!
Treachery is so foul, and thou, thou art so fair!
Ne'er was one who ever acted like to thee,
Nought in all the world could e'er so perfect be!

TO AN UNPLEASANT ACQUAINTANCE.

How oft have I got that for which I least care
  Through you—may you get your *quietus!*
Other folks' eyes are modest, but yours, I declare,
  With what impudent stares do they meet us.
I wish that God's bitterest curses would fall
On the road that e'er brought us together at all!

DESERTED.

P. 182.

Oh! thou who hast forsaken me,
  Alas! the right is on thy side.
Thou'st found some other friend, I see,
  With whom thou'rt ever occupied.

My lord! may Heaven ne'er insist
  On all that thou to me dost owe.
How couldst thou to an envier list,
  Who urged thee on to work me woe?

And who was it, for Heaven's sake,
  Perverted thee from friendship's creed?
Ah heart! what haste thou aye dost make
  Love's missionary's call to heed!

Ah! would I had, oh! heart so dear,
  Another heart to serve me now!
Oh! language of my flowing tear,
  How fluent in Love's theme art thou!

What, eye of mine! dost thou deplore?
Is not this thine own doing, pray?
Enquiring friend! enquire no more
About one who has passed away.

I've passed a wretched night—alas!
Oh would that it the fate might be
Of every one such nights to pass,
Who wisheth harm to thee and me!

TO AN UNKIND FRIEND.

I have forsaken every one but you,
I've told you that of friends I've none but you. P. 183.
But though you act as one estranged with me,
I look to you;—things are unchanged with me.
What pains me most appears to please you now.
By Heaven! he fares but ill who sees you now.
Yet, praise to Him whose grace decrees you now!

A FAREWELL.

Only too well I know that I
Am little enough concern to you;
Must I for ever with longing eye
Gaze upon you and turn to you?

All who behold me pity me,
Lost as I am while nigh to you.
Well, let all bygones bygones be,
And then for aye good bye to you!

UNDER AN OBLIGATION.

Curse on the dire necessity
  That forced me ever to fly to you!
Curse on the fate that made me be
  Tied in a business tie to you!
Heaven, mayhap, will set me free,
  And grant me to say good-bye to you.

LINES

[Written at the heading of a letter to a friend for whom he had done some service.]

P. 184. Since your letter came I never ceased to stand,
  Till I'd executed all you did command!
What an honour! to fulfil but one request
  That you hint at, or to do your least behest.

AN OFFER.

I have a little bit of fish,
  And I've a crust of bread, which I
Have made of whitest flour; I wish
  To give them both in charity!
They will impart a zest, you'll find,
  To anything that comes behind.

TO A BEAUTY.

Oh some one's beauty, gently, pray!
Or every one thou soon wilt slay!
Thine eyes bid all men love, both those
Who know not love and him who knows.
Oh, thou who dost forsake me so!

Yet not from ill will; but I trow,
As Mehdi's daughter left her Tell,
The page-boy that she loved so well!
Of all my heart there's but a spot
Remaining—nay, I fear there's not!
And of my body scarce a trace P. 185.
Is left that Love doth not efface.
My heart for her whom I love best,
And will not name, but hide her, lest——:
I clasped her, and she seemed to be
A bough in shape and pliancy.
Her ample veil aside I drew,
And lo! a moon appeared in view.
I kissed her on her cheek so dear
Full ninety times, or something near.
Ah! what an hour that was to me,
It passed so very pleasantly.

A BORE.

I know a bore, whom, for his hateful mien,
I dread as though he were my fate pursuing:
Whene'er I say, "he will no more be seen,"
I meet him, just as though he were my doing.

ON A FRIEND SUFFERING FROM OPHTHALMIA.

They say my friend is suffering in the eyes;
That's quite absurd, did they consider well.
How can it be? when every body cries,
"They're better far than those of a gazelle!"
Nay! but they're like red wine, so I expect,
In colour, as they're like it in effect.

P. 186.

A CONGRATULATORY ODE

[Addressed to the Illustrious Emír Nasr eddín Abu l Fatḥ ibn el Lamṭí on his arrival.]

God would not have it save that thou shouldst be
Generous and kind, and that the treachery
Of those who envy me should come to naught.
From every ill with which thy path is fraught
Thy goodness save thee, which God long defend.
May they who envy thee ne'er gain their end,
But may'st thou gain thine end of them alway.
Erewhile thou didst set forth, and didst obey
Kámil's behests, thereby obeying then
God's high behests revealéd unto men.
Thy travel brought not travail, but delight,
Nay, thou didst profit by thine enviers' spite.
The sword is sheathed to be drawn forth when worn;
The lance is cramped and straightened to be borne.
God bless the day that thou wert safe therein,
For it I pardon bygone time its sin.
If of a day both bright and clear you hear,
This is the day they mean, both bright and clear.
Now has he erred, who wishes Nasr ill,
His plans have failed, he fears discredit still!
A Prince possessed of all the kindly traits
That bards rejoice to tell of in their lays.
Foremost of men in rank, the safest tower,
Noblest in soul, and highest far in power.
Amongst mankind I liken him to none,
However high, except the noblest one.
'Tis one with him, when danger is at hand,
The laying bare his purpose and his brand.
So watchful is he, that his wits so bright
Might set a lamp-wick in a blaze of light.

The boast and honour of the clan of Teim, P. 187.
Through him its glory groweth more sublime.
Attain, my liege, all I could wish to see!
Remain the hope of those who trust in thee!
May'st thou have noble sons, and see as well
Their cubs grow up to be like lions fell.
May their rewards like freest gifts be seen,
Their suitors needing not a go-between.
Riding, in war, to grace thy pageants all,
Halting, in peace, to grace thy banquet-hall.
Rivers in bounty, moons in the night be they,
Showers in the drought, and lions in the fray!
Thy gracious favour may they never miss,
But gain thereby at last the realms of bliss.
Perchance a glimpse of thy regard may yield
Water and pasture to my parchéd field.
Lo! I of fortune and its shifts complain;
Your Highness will not let me sue in vain.
Here in a land I dwell that has no peer,
And, but for thee, I would not move from here.
Grant me then thy regard, perchance at last,
Fortune may so atone for what has passed.
The man, I ween, who makes thy gifts his store,
Is rich enough when trouble's at his door.
Since I have sought thee I have aye appeared
Sought for myself by all men, and revered.
What was I but a sword that long had lain
Rusty, 'till thou didst polish it again?
Why should I not in each high aim succeed,
When thou dost help and aid me?—why indeed?

P. 188.

AN ODE

[Addressed to the Illustrious Emír Mejd ed dín ibn Ismá'íl ibn el Lamṭí, on quitting his service.]

The sure signs of thy glory bright,
  They do not change at any time.
Unto thy lofty station's height
  There is no way by which to climb.

Thy qualities excel, I ween,
  Those of all generations past,
Of all the world has ever seen,
  How much more then of this the last!

Thy deeds bear witness that we find
  In thee alone that virtue rare,
In which the rest of human kind
  Can only as a stranger share.

Men are bewildered, as we see,
  At glories which thou dost possess;
For metaphor and imagery
  Can ne'er their magnitude express.

A high repute that office bears,
  Amongst whose holders thee we find;
As do that province's affairs
  Whose rule is unto thee consigned.

When sudden dangers supervene,
  Nor does thine ardour e'er abate
At all, nor is thy judgment seen
  To waver, or to vacillate.

The kindness, which in thee we find,
  Is not deferred from day to day;
While persons who are good and kind,
  Thou knowest well how few are they.

He, who hath placed his hopes in thee,
  Need seek no intervention then
But Hope alone, for verily
  Thou art the Hope and trust of men!

Sufficient is it to have gained
  Thy promise, for a man may feel
That when thy promise is obtained,
  'Tis sure—for thou art Isma'íl.

Oh thou, whose deeds a fame have won
  Throughout the whole wide world renowned,
E'en as with shining light the sun
  Upon its course revolveth round.

The gifts and bounties thou dost spread
  Go journeying forth both far and near;
They travel on, though city-bred,
  Like nomad tribes from year to year.

Thy soul is like a meadow fair,
  Whereon there blows a gentle gale,
Which, wandering in the evening there,
  A robe with dew-drops moist doth trail.

Thy reading of God's word, its beams
  Illumine all the darkness round;
So pleasantly adorned it seems
  With musical and rhythmic sound.

If, in the darkness of the night, P. 189.
  My lord should rouse himself for prayer,
You'd fancy, from his forehead's light,
  A brilliant lamp was burning there!

The beauties of his bounty fill
  The time he lives in, and the age
Doth from all others turn, and still
  With him alone itself engage.

This is an honour, which 'twere vain
For any one but him to claim.
Nay! 'tis not every man can gain
A poet's or a hero's fame!

His life the present age arrays
In many a beauty rich and rare,
As though a forehead's brilliant blaze,
Or pastern's snowy ring, were there!

With him doth every virtue find
An easy and a ready sale;
Though virtues now of every kind
Are virtually of no avail.

The clan from which my lord doth trace
His pedigree, there sprang from them
"The best of all the mortal race[1],"
A noble clan in branch and stem.

Whom e'er you meet amongst them all,
You meet a hero brave and fair,
Who on the foe doth fiercely fall,
Yet deigns the vanquished's lives to spare.

Alike with him, his lances bright
And fingers tinged with ruddy dyes;
His ink-horn and his falchion light,
That ready from its scabbard flies,

In battle, when the falchion's cheek
Is ruddy as the blushing rose,
And when the lance's sides so sleek
Do swerve and sway with martial throes.

[1] Mohammed.

Thou, who dost once a favour show,
  And dost repeat it o'er and o'er!
Thy favours to thy servants go,
  Joined with thy favours evermore.

From one to whom thy cruelty
  Thou long hast shewn, now comes this call;
And yet he now will come to thee
  Full readily in spite of all.

It is thy slave that calls, of whom
  I see that thou dost weary grow.
That slave am I, who dares presume,
  The one of whom thou'rt wearied so.

Be as it pleases thee, for thou
  To me art ever kind and dear;
The love I cherish for thee now
  Is love that cannot change or veer.

Lo! I am he whom thou dost know,
  No other witness I require;
For when thy knowledge serves thee so,
  What witness couldst thou then desire?

Alas for all those times gone by!
  That once I used to pass with thee,
When in the mansions of the sky
  An honoured guest I seemed to be!

The mornings were like sweetest scent,
  The evenings like cool winds the while—
My tears for them too soon were spent, P. 190.
  Were they the Tigris or the Nile!

Whene'er I may myself describe
  As serving such an one as thee,
'Tis like referring to a tribe,
  Or ancient noble family.

Misfortunes would be put to rout
  At but the mention of the word;
It seems to hedge me round about,
  As though with many a spear and sword.

This is a style entirely new,
  One which I only exercise;
It freshens, as with gentle dew,
  The field of verse in which it lies—

A field, from whence erewhile I took
  The ripest fruits of learning fair,
But which, alas! I long forsook,
  Till slow decay had settled there.

All thirsty have I left its land,
  Whilst thou estranged from me didst seem,
Erewhile the favours of thy hand
  Well watered it with many a stream.

Though thou art fain to shun it, see!
  It spongeth on thee all the same;
But sponging on the love of thee
  Can never be accounted shame!

Nay! when I saw thee turn from me,
  I turned me from its cult divine;
Though godless, base apostasy
  Has never yet been cult of mine!

Now, happy may thy feast-day be;
  And very many glad returns
I wish thee of it, for from thee
  Its glory and its grace it earns.

And may'st thou live, oh Mejd ed dín!
  To see a thousand such again:
Thy Lordship has for ever been
  The refuge and the hope of men!

Too short for thee will always be
  The robe of eulogistic song:
And yet, for any one but thee,
  I ween its skirts are all too long.

But know that e'en my skilful pen
  Is for thy praises all too weak;
And therefore pardon other men,
  For how shall they presume to speak?

Lo! I am one who ever deem
  That misers should detested be;
Yet of such verse as this I seem
  A miser unto all but thee.

It is a pearl, this verse of mine,
  Thou art the sea wherein it lies,
But evermore thy grace benign
  Displayeth it unto our eyes!

INTERRUPTION.

P. 191.

I never come to sit with thee,
  And have a little private talk,
But it would seem the Lord's decree,
  That in some wretched bore should walk.

As forward this same bore appears,
  As does my heart when passion calls;
As dull and senseless as my ears,
  When Mentor's voice upon them falls!

ON BEING ENTRUSTED WITH A SECRET.

Haply thou'lt list an hour to what I say,
Now spies and scolds for once have gone away.

Much need of thee now doth my soul contain,
Which 'twere too long to detail and explain.
Then come, nor with us let there be a third,
Each shall recount his sorrow and be heard.
But see my loved one's secret be not told;
Such things I would from all the world withhold.
Now by thy life! tell me whom love doth slay,
For to that slain one I incline alway.
No lovers ever reached a state like mine,
No road unto it could they e'er divine.
Not every maid is a Butheina true,
Whose finger-tips are tinged with roseate hue.
Not every youth is a Jamíl, I say,
Whose heart some cruel maid has stolen away!
Thou saidst thy say, oh Mentor! and I heard,
But ah! for me it was a heavy word.
But I forgive thee, for in love, I trow,
Is many a bitterness, and well we know
That proudest chiefs therein have sunk full low.
Friends, to this sadness I am used, alas!
Till I should miss it should it chance to pass.
P. 192. Ah! of my former self there's scarce a trace;—
Love lasts so long, what else should be my case!
Yet do I keep thy secret safe, although
Men's thoughts anent it wander to and fro.
Let all our angry words be gone and past;—
How long shall all this correspondence last?
Let that soft breeze from thee once more come nigh,—
The breeze is languid, so, alas! am I!
Thou hast my heart, yet dost its rights refuse,
Tho' as thy neighbour and thy guest it sues!

A LOVE-SONG.

Such soft and gentle mood had she,
  Methought she was the Zephyr rare!
So beautiful she was to see,
  Methought that Beauty's[1] self was there.

And yet such cruelty she showed,
  I had no hope that she'd relent;
She kept such distance, that the road
  Was lost to me by which she went.

I love her. Oh! her tiny waist
  Is girded in so slight and slim;
But oh! how fully may be traced
  The contours of each rounded limb!

With youthful Beauty's brilliancy
  Her body gloweth fresh and fair;—
Hast never seen a willow-tree,
  That swayeth in the desert air?

Her gait is sweet, and eke her lip;
  Methinks I seem to see in this
A quivering lance, and seem to sip
  In that a honey-laden kiss.

Ah! dear one, those who act the spy
  Upon us are a numerous crew;
But, when thou art no longer nigh,
  My means of patience are but few!

What! shall my heart fear treachery
  From thee, when, as thou knowest well,
As neighbour and as guest with thee,
  That self-same heart so long did dwell?

[1] In the original *Jamíl*, "The Handsome," a hero of Arab romance celebrated for his beauty.

I'll keep away, lest it should seem
That thou hast made a slave of me!
I'll visit thee, that none should deem
That I at length have tired of thee!

THE ANSWER.

P. 193.

Tell me, Envoy, I implore!
Why these long reproaches?—Nay,
Tell them to me o'er and o'er,
I rejoice at what you say.

In my ear her name repeat,
Let the tale be long, I pray.
What reception did you meet,—
Welcomed there, or turned away?

If I have regained her love,
Noble shall thy guerdon be:—
E'en my life-blood, should it prove
Worthy, 'tis not much to me!

AN APPEAL.

Yes! the tale is as you say,
I'll tell it though our mentors flout us;
Yes! and what care I, I pray?
Let folks say what they like about us!

Let other lovers fear disgrace,
Let others in their love despair;
In *my* heart Some-one holds her place,
There is no change of feeling there!

The blamer scolds, he does not know
  How long my tale of love may be.
Ah! dear, my heart's a heart, I trow,
  That ne'er will tire or turn from thee.

When will fate make thee kind, I pray, P. 194.
  And stop all words us twain between?—
Ah me! reproaches every day;
  My envoy is tired out, I ween.

AN APPEAL.

Of all my friends thou wert the first;
  My future love is all for thee;
My friendship's as thou knew'st it erst,—
  More perfect still if such may be.

To thee restricted is my heart,
  Yet unconstrained my tear-drops flow.
Thou threatenest me that we must part,
  And what thou say'st thou dost, I know!

Thou hast a good excuse, I vow,
  But still I hope thou'lt love me yet!
Drained dry are those excuses now
  With which enquiring folks I met.

How long must I to all men lie?
  How long these specious speeches frame?
Say unto yonder Mentor, "Fie!
  "You tire him whom you scold and blame.

"You chide one will thy chiding scorn,
  "You scold one will not lend an ear!
"A mentor's wrath is easier borne
  "Than wrath from one we love so dear!"

THE RESIGNED LOVER.

P. 195. I welcome from thee all things whatsoe'er;
Thy hests upon my very eyes I bear.
If thou should'st wish for what is death to me,
I'll give it—'tis a trifling gift and free;
Fear not or sin or trouble on that head,
For lovers' blood may unavenged be shed.
Though with thy conduct it is hard to cope,
Yet still thou art our happiness and hope.
Woe to the swain, of whom through love of thee
They spread abroad so many a calumny!
Ah me! in what strange fashion am I used,
I am excused, and yet I get abused.
I have a loved one—whom I will not say—
I have been slain outright by him to-day;
A lord, whose wont it is to weary grow,
I wear his livery, yet he wearies so!
How long, oh thou that dost abide with me,
Shall all thy promises protracted be?
Ah! when at length I die of thirst so sore,
After my death may Nile flow on no more!

TO A FORGETFUL PATRON.

I do reproach you, friends, whene'er I view
  Signs of estrangement in you and caprice;
Yet I excuse you also, for 'tis true
I was too pressing when ye weary grew,
  And from too constant absence would not cease.

P. 196. He scorns me now, whom once I did esteem,
  He holds me cheap, whom once I held so dear!
From you I'll bear whate'er like woe may seem,
And of you will content me with a dream
  That to my fancy in my sleep comes near.

So shall our mutual love last on for aye,
  For of aught else I take not any care.
Oh! House of Kamil, while I live I'll pray
For health and safety on you, and alway
  Will ask about your health and how you fare.

Strange! that I should blame Hassan, when I know
  That to his goodness I am so in debt!
'Tis true he did show coolness towards me, though
That never rankled in my mind, I trow.
  If he forgets me, I can ne'er forget,
  If he is heart-whole, I am not so yet.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

I have many a tale of passion which most jealously I hide,
Which not e'en to letters or to messengers would I confide.
Every gentle gale that bloweth doth from me a message bear:
Search therein, and you will find the traces of my kisses there!
Close concealed from every member I have kept my love for you,
Even from my very ears, and from my mouth and eye-sight too;
And I've never changed from that fidelity I showed before.
Would ye know my story, take it from my state in days of yore.
There is that between us which I doubt not that ye fully know,—
Love that I protest can never fail and never weary grow;
Friendship without any fulsome flattery to gloss it o'er;
Such 'twould make a pretty maiden need her ornaments no more.
Ye have left me, and I've nothing left to cheer or comfort me,
Save to seek a slight relief in lingering hope and memory.
And I scheme to sleep, if haply I may see you in a dream; P. 197.
Verily I ween a lover often is obliged to scheme.
Now my friend has gone I've left the poesy I used to love,
Neither a gazelle nor a *ghazal*[1] can now my fancy move.

[1] *ghazal*, a love-song.

When my Mentor bade me have a little patience, I replied,
"Marry! you may spare your scolding, I am too much occupied;
"What you have demanded of me I have ne'er possessed, I trow,
"Take my word, 'tis what I cannot pay, and do not even owe!
"All this lengthened scolding of a lover who will heed it not
"Is more thrown away than poet's tears o'er a deserted spot!
"For the patience which you hint at is not in my power, you see:
"Would indeed it were, for patience would be better far for me!"

TO A FRIEND.

[On finding him from home when he called.]

If thou'rt busy, and that on a Sunday[1],
I wonder what day thou art free;
Fix an hour for my meeting thee one day,
To tell all my longing for thee.

I'll love thee whatever thy state be,
To anger or pleasure inclined,—
And I'm still to whatever my fate be,
Injustice or justice, resigned.

But know that I've striven all vainly,
And to speak out I cannot but choose:
And now that I've spoken out plainly,—
My life be thy ransom!—excuse.

'Tis my prayer that thou mayest for ever
All joys and all happiness prove,
And never be called on to sever,
Like me, from the one that you love!

[1] In the original, Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath.

PILGRIM MEMORIES.

I long for times long gone by in the glade P. 198.
Of fair Muhaṣṣeb hard by Mina's stream;
And for the life I led beneath its shade,
That once so cool and pleasant used to seem.

Ah me! how lovely were its breeze and brook,
Its sandy plain, its pebbly bed as well.
Ah me! how sad when I that spot forsook,
And left behind its gentle young gazelle.

How oft have I there taken my delight,
Where with twin summits Merwa's mount arose;
And communed with that moon so full and bright,
Which its secluded bridal rooms enclose.

Within my heart its story always stays,
No matter where I chance to make my home;
And still its image ever meets my gaze,
No matter in what land I chance to roam.

When I remember Hejjáz, and the days
Of holy pleasure which I spent in it,
Then I resemble, as I go my ways,
A palsied man when stricken by his fit.

And thou! my friend, who dost in Kheif reside,
Help me when yonder Pilgrims start away;
And seek the valley, take its right-hand side,
Where tall spears quiver in a dread array.

There to the East my Zeinab's house thou'lt see,
Its front majestic thou canst ne'er mistake.
Say, "Where's the captive?"—"Who's that?"—"that is he!"—
Like one who knows not what course next to take.

And so keep on, until a chance appears
  To gain the object thou would'st fain fulfil,
Then name me privately in Zeinab's ears,
  And say, "His mind is dwelling on thee still."

Haply, it may be, when my name shall fall
  Upon her ear, she will be pleased and say,
"Is so and so then with you after all?
  "How is my poor friend getting on, I pray?"

AN EPIGRAM.

P. 199. Whene'er I see her drawing nigh,
  In height and shape so fair to see,
"Oh! *Alif*[1] of her form," say I,
  "An *Alif*, pray, *of union* be!"

TO A PATRON.

My lord! for whom no substitute on earth I see—
Oh! thou who only art both life and hope to me—
Oh! tell me, sir, what can I scheme, what can I do,
If all that people say of me indeed be true?
No power have I, and schemes may not avail me yet;
Gazelles, and eke ghazals[2], I in this strait forget.
My heart is taking trouble, nay, 'tis troubled sore
About this journey where, as has been said of yore,
"I find no camel, male or female, there for me;"
But one like thou art is sufficient guarantee.
For, next to God above, in thee my trust I place,
And, should I e'en prove tedious, thou art full of grace.

[1] The Arab poets often liken a tall and graceful person to the letter *alif* ا. This letter when capable of elision is technically called in grammar *the alif of union.*

[2] See note, p. 225.

How many a fault and failing art thou wont to hide;
In such as thee we hope whenever ills betide.
'Twere well that thou shouldst treat us well in word and fact,
Which will be mindful, and which having said will act.

AN EXCUSE.

Thou, who dost blame me for my act, P. 200.
Thou errest both in word and fact.
Thou'rt quick to blame me, but, in fine,
The fault is rather thine than mine.
"'Twas not the work for me," I said,
"Would some one could do it instead!"
For though the moon may quickly go,
'Tis no fault of the moon, I trow,
If Saturn does go rather slow!

A BORE.

You bore! whene'er you meet my eyes,
  A lengthened anguish I endure:
A choking in my throat doth rise,
  That nothing ever seems to cure.

Take all the virtues of mankind,
  Your faults are twice as much, or more.
How shall I any method find
  To get away from such a bore?

I'm so perplexed upon this score,
  That what to say I do not know:
By Heaven! you are indeed a bore,
  By Heaven! you are a bore, I trow!

ON A LOQUACIOUS PERSON.

P. 201. Although the fellow talks so much,
He knows not what he talks about;
And when he speaks a speech, 'tis such
You cannot find the meaning out.

With idle tales for every head,
A lot of it is little wit;
Without a root its branches spread,
And common sense rejecteth it.

His ceaseless talking turns my head,
Ah! would I could the upshot see!
To sum up—he is just like lead,
Too heavy and too dull for me!

HARD WORDS.

Thou said'st that thou hast angry been;
No gentle thing, I ween, to tell.
Thou know'st not what thy words may mean,
To me, alas! they sound a knell.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Ask not, prithee, how I fare,
That too long a story were;
Fate may let us meet some day,
And thou'lt list to what I say.
Heaven's wont is to be kind,
As we all are wont to find;
This our absence then, at last,
May be shortly gone and past.

TO A VISITOR.

The day on which thy face I view, P. 202.
Much thanks from me to it are due;
The road thou comest, 'tis but just
That I should kiss its very dust.

LINES WRITTEN ON NEW-YEAR'S EVE[1].

Oh thou! o'er whom the cooling Zephyrs play,
 What kindly pleasant qualities are these!
Intoxicate, whom moods capricious sway,
 As bows the graceful sapling with the breeze.

She is debarred from speaking to me, yet P. 203.
 Her eyes full many a loving message bear.
How sweet, how glad the time when erst we met,
 And when for once our Mentor was not there.

Then love and joy and drunkenness prevailed,—
 E'en one of these had thrown my senses o'er!—
The "moon" that shone so bright for me was veiled,
 The "branch" that swayed for me a garment wore!

The rose upon her cheek was fresh and bright,
 And drooped the fair narcissus of her eye.
Clear, as I love it, then was my delight,
 Full merry then with what I love was I.

Ah dear! 'tis right I should thy champion be,
 Down in the lists of Love my gage to throw;
The passion which I cherish now for thee,
 Its secret shall the Mentor never know!

[1] The Arabic foot-note to this poem refers only to the metre, and will be translated and explained in the commentary.

For love of thee I give my life away,
  If to accept my gift thou would'st but deign!
I have a boon to crave of thee, oh! say,
  Must I now crave of thee, and crave in vain?

Nay, in thy face an omen fair I read;
  There can be nothing false in such a sign.
P. 204. No mediator in thy love I need,
  I have one in that gentle heart of thine.

This year is past and gone, ah! would I knew
  If next year will bring back thy love to me.
A beggar at thy gate I humbly sue,
  And stretch a suppliant hand out unto thee:

One who will be content if thou but spare
  The smallest dole of union as his meed.—
"A dew-drop from his well-beloved fair
  The lover deems a grateful shower indeed."

REGRETS AND HOPES.

Thou'rt stubborn, how long shall this course go on?
  'Tis fully time the careless should awake.
How great my grief for a whole life-time gone!
  'Tis lost, and thence no profit may I take.

My present evil plight seems hard on me,
  No man of sense would e'er have acted so:
I do not know what the result may be,
  But things are looking dreadful, as you know.

Oh! Lord, all merciful to me art Thou!
  My hopes and longings to Thee have I brought.
Thou wilt not turn away a guest, who now
  The shelter of Thy ample court hath sought.
Most kind of all in whom the trusting trust,
From Thy gate is the suppliant never thrust.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

If e'er we meet alone after to-day, P. 206.
Long shall we scold each other, you and I.
That you did this, I once was loth to say,
But I shall have to say it by and by.
You've told me things against yourself, I ween,
And being told, I must accept the tale.
I've kept some matters for you which I mean
To tell you soon; the which in full detail,
And eke in sum and substance, I have wrought.
By heaven! letters cannot quench one's thirst,
Nor lovers' plaints be by an Envoy brought.
'Twas only absence;—when we meet, as erst
We used to meet, all this will quickly pass.
My Mentors deem the tears I shed for you
Too many; yet for your sweet sake, alas!
Many although they be, they are too few.
Not one to borrow other's tears am I,
Wherewith to weep when friends depart from me;
While nought but tears flow from another's eye,
From my lids flow full many a flood and sea.
I swear my tears would not be lost on thee,
E'en though my soul should flow out through their tide.
Others a foeman's speeches may believe,
Others too hastily their loved ones chide!
But those who wish my company to leave,
When I am gone will then regret and grieve.
Oh, you who now reproach me for my sigh,
I am not listening to you. Oft, indeed,
Have you gone prosing on like this, while I
Of all your scolding take but little heed.
If those I love are thus content with me,
Lord! let not scolders, too, contented be.

A REVERIE.

P. 206.

Let the folks with prying eyes
Talk and tattle as they may;
For between us there are ties
Which shall last for aye.

There are secrets in my heart,
Hidden there for thee alone;
Such as notes can ne'er impart,
Envoys ne'er make known.

Were I now to send to thee
All my messages of love,
Roads would all too narrow be,
Ways too narrow prove.

Every morn and every night
Longing maketh sport of me,
Till some reeling, drunken wight
I appear to be.

E'en the Zephyr brings me bliss,
If it o'er thy home hath passed;
'Tis as though thy perfumed kiss
Breathed in every blast.

Oft I place a load of care
On my heart for love of thee,
Such as never heart could bear
Half so patiently.

Oft I bid it bear the pain
Of absence, aye, and chide it too.
Chiding lovers is in vain
When their love is true.

Pity for the lover, whom
No man aideth to prevail
With thee, who can find no room
In or hill or dale!

By the Lord! my suit doth seem
Truly a perplexing one;—
What to think, or what to scheme,
What is to be done?

Whensoe'er I speak of thee,
Fairer grows this verse of mine;
Fair must be the poetry
On a face divine.

Absent ones! and yet do I
In my thoughts behold them yet;
E'en when parted from mine eye
'Tis as though we met.

Absence makes them yet more dear
To me in my heart alway;
E'en as though they sought me here
On our parting day.

I am faithful to a friend,
Though he should deceive:
To my compact I attend,
Though my side he leave.

I'm a lover in whose mind
Treachery holds no place;
'Tis my nature which, I find,
Nought can e'er efface.

Thou who shalt my message bear
To —— her name I will not own; P. 207.
'Tis in such a grave affair
That the *man* is known.

Take my greeting to her, be
Sure to tell the tale with care:
Kiss the very ground for me
On arriving there.

Tell her, prithee, of my state,
If alone she chance to be;
Nor in lengthy terms relate—
Wearied soon is she!

This then is my chief request.
Should thy mission but prevail,
Then the hopes on which I rest
Will not ever fail.

And in every grave affair,
Whensoe'er it comes, will I,
After God, upon thy care
Evermore rely.

For with thee whate'er it be
Thou attemptest—God be praised!—
Sloth we never find, nor see
Difficulties raised.

Man doth by his fellows live,
Still requiting good or ill;
Thanks for kindness still we give,
Rumour travels still.

And when aims are hard to gain,
Man must scheme as best he may:
'Tis not always quite in vain
That our schemes we lay.

Thou! to whom these words I sing,
If thou wilt but list to me,
Thou shalt find there everything
Thou canst wish to see:

Love-songs that shall charm the soul
With their fancies fine and rare;
Maxims permeate the whole,
Proverbs too are there.

Though, I ween, a maiden fair
May with beauty rest content,
How much fairer if she wear
Gems and ornament!

In affairs of deep concern
Put thou from thee all delay,
Time, that oft doth shift and turn,
Speedeth fast away.

Lifetime wasted long ago,
Grieve for that if thou must grieve:
Nought in lieu of life, I trow,
Canst thou e'er receive.

Haste then, and anticipate
Time before reverse befall.
Fortunes, aye and kingly state,
Time reverses all.

Act whene'er thou hast the bent;
Times are all alike, I ween.
Haste and slowness ne'er prevent
What has fated been.

Seek not in the stars thy lot,
When thou dost a deed of note;
For 'tis God that works, and not
Either "Ram" or "Goat."

For on happiness the stars P. 208.
Have not any influence;
Let not "Saturn" then, or "Mars",
So mislead thy sense.

God's command is one of might;
Horoscopes but lead astray;
All the Law decrees is right,
Man can but obey.

TO A PATRON.

Most illustrious master mine!
Virtue there is none but thine.
If our parting pleases thee,
'Tis like meeting then to me.
Long thy cruelty I bore,
And it exercised me sore.
All things from thee whatsoe'er,
Save thy coolness, I can bear.
Master mine! a slave like me
Cannot part from one like thee.
Life for me has no delight
When thou'rt parted from my sight.
Lifeless may that bosom be
That from love of thee is free!
Ne'er have I myself perceived
Of thy wonted gifts bereaved.
From each friend I fain would greet,
Nought but fresh delays I meet.
Every day, too, at the pain
Of parting, fall my tears like rain.
God decrees it so to be;
Just, I ween, is God's decree.

THE UNWILLING TRAVELLER.

P. 209.
Must I then part, and travel on for aye?
And yet to none but God I tell my sorrow.
Misfortune brings me still, from day to day,
Some unexpected journey for the morrow.

Yet 'tis not at my own desire I roam,
My heart is not aweary yet of home.
The friendless stranger on a foreign strand
Lives not like those who dwell within the land,
With all their family and friends at hand.

A REMONSTRANCE.

Wherefore turns she so from me,
  Scolding so severely?
Can she tired and weary be,
  Or coquetting merely?

Will she my excuses hear,
  If I supplicate her?
Ah! she holds me cheap, I fear,
  Though so dear I rate her!

I forgive her, she could see
  Other folks backbite me,
And she only said of me
  What they said to spite me.

Master! inasmuch as thou
  Hast of thy love bereft me,
'Mongst my fellows I have now
  No position left me.

Thou art life itself to me,
  How then can I sever
Thus, without a pang, from thee,
  Oh! my life, for ever?

Right and left about I stare,
  When thou art not nigh me;
Thy beauty and thy bounty ne'er P. 210.
  Can be forgotten by me.

Beauty's own Imám art thou,
  By thee my heart's directed.
Ah, by Heaven! I'm by thee now
  Unlawfully suspected.

"Some suspicions verily
  Are sins[1];" so is it worded;
And nought but truth by God most High
  Is in His Word recorded.

AN APOLOGY.

Thou wilt be indulgent, though so bold am I;
By my life! thou art so noble and so high.
What indeed should such a good kind master do
To one who loves him, but who has been faulty too?
Well, be good enough to take it kindly, pray:
Goodness is, and ever has been, thine alway.
Let it be a favour, and I'll thankful be,
Add it to thy former favours unto me.

TO A FRIEND.

[Apologising for not visiting him more frequently.]

But for the horror of intruding which I feel,
  I'd visit you at morning, and at night also;
Aye, and between them, at the hour of midday meal,
  Until you'd grumble sorely at my sponging so.
But I would rather not impose upon a friend;
I am not an intruder, that you may depend.

[1] Korán, ch. 49. ver. 12.

ON A FRIEND'S DEPARTURE.

Thou art leaving, and I mourn P. 211.
  At this journey thou dost make.
Ah! the lover vext and lorn,
  Knowing not what course to take!
Thou art life itself to me;
  If one's life is from him torn,
What shall his condition be?

TO A KIND FRIEND.

Without an introduction I commence:
The noble ever show benevolence.
I found thee when, amongst all human-kind,
I had no brother either good or kind.
Thou didst befriend me when obliged to roam,
Till thou didst make me feel myself at home.
Thou didst return with that great kindness, then,
Of which thou'rt master among mortal men.
I do not grieve when troubles come to me;
Why should I grieve at troubles, having thee?
Full many a brother have I had ere now,
But worthiest of my gratitude art thou.

GEOMANCY.

When thou, alas! didst from me part, P. 212.
I learnt the geomantic[1] art:
If haply I might there descry
Some signs of meeting by and by.

[1] A method of divination with sand.

I loved each white and ruddy streak—
The colours that I used to see
Of old upon the maiden's cheek,
Who stole my wits away from me!
They said, "Here is a Way." I cried,
"O Lord! unto my loved one's side!"
They said, "They meet;" and then said I,
"Lord, grant we may meet, she and I!"
I'm like Majnún[1], that crazy wight:
Then never wonder at the sight,
If thus upon the sand I write!

ON A HASTY VISIT.

In haste does he his visit pay,
  Wherefore I evermore complain:
He comes to see me, but I say,
"He never came at all to-day,"
  So quickly he goes back again.

To ask me how I fare he came;
  Then, never asking how I fare,
He turned away; and now I blame
And chide him for the robe of shame
  Which he, alas! has made me wear.

I ween it would have harmed him not,
  Had he a longer visit paid;—
How oft is it the lover's lot
To linger on the lonely spot
  Where whilom dwelt the much-loved maid[2].

[1] Cais, of the tribe of 'Amer, who went mad for love of Leila, and passed his life in the desert writing her name upon the sand, is a favourite hero of Eastern Romance. He is generally spoken of as Majnún, "the madman."

[2] See footnote to p. 187.

My master! pardon, I implore,
  The slips that may in me appear,
For that thou hast concealed before
My faults and failings o'er and o'er;
  And that thou art my brother dear,
  My lord, my liege, without a peer!

A PETITION.

[Written to the most illustrious Count[1], the chief, Kemâl eddîn Omar ibn Abî Jarâdeh, P. 213. commonly known as Ibn el Gholâm the Secretary, of Aleppo.]

I call on thee if needs e'er call on me;
  I say, "a chief like him must needs be kind."
Mayhap of Virtue thou wilt jealous be,
  Whose lord thou art, and wilt not be inclined
To act thus meanly. If it must be so,
  To bearing obligations I'm resigned,
That is, from thee,—from others, no! no! no!
  I've borne my griefs to others in the past,
And lightened thee, until it seems as though
  I must perforce become a bore at last.
But 'tis my nature, as I've always shown,
  Save to a friend I will not seem downcast.
Long have I lived, and yet I ne'er was known
  To grieve at mishaps.—Nay, I grieve, 'tis true,
But at a beauteous maid's caprice alone.
  Save unto love, I never cringe or sue;
No fear, except at hate or parting, show.
  Each morn my soul with passion melts anew,
Each eve love's torrents through my being flow.
  I love the young fawn with its startled glance,
The fresh, young branch when swaying to and fro;
  Nor have I lost, although my years advance,

[1] صاحب Ṣâḥib, *comes regis*, is almost exactly equivalent to the European title.

My taste for sport and love; nor lost, indeed,
  My taste for glory and for lofty chance.
Full many a suppliant in his hour of need
  Has called on me to aid him, whereat I
Have done for him what did his hopes exceed,
  Anticipating by my care his cry
In every want, nor made him wait for me.
  And I have greeted him, when he came nigh,
P. 214. With frankness, kindness, welcome, courtesy,
  And home; displaying him a modest look,
Fair speech, and bounty quickly shown, and free.
  Till for a generous patron me he took,
While he appeared to me the same to be.

A WASTED LIFETIME

Now hoary age alights at last,
  Ah, yes! alights upon my brow.
I weep for youth that's gone and past,
  Alas! alas! 'tis gone by now!
Now tell me, sirrah, tell me, pray,—
I mean myself by what I say,—
At seventy would'st thou have me do
What erst I did at twenty-two?
Ah! no, by heaven! for such pretence
Were not the words of common sense.
Thou oft didst plead thy youth, of yore,
Now that excuse exists no more.
In vain thou didst thyself appease,—
Shall what is vain for ever please?
The mirth, that thou would'st fain display
Lies many a dreary stage away.
This long time hast thou spent in vain,
And ne'er a profit didst thou gain.

A PANEGYRIC.

[On el Melik en Náṣir, Ṣaláḥ ed dín Yúsuf, son of el Melik el 'Azíz Mohammed, son of el Melik ed Dháhir Ghází, son of el Melik en Náṣir Ṣaláḥ ed dín Yúsuf ibn Aiyúb (SALADIN) A.H. 642=A.D. 1244.] P. 215.

How dear she was my love could see,
And so coquetted more and more.
Her promises contented me,
And so to make them she forbore.
Her envoy comes, but in his face
No more a pleasant look I trace,
As I was wont in days of yore.

And all my day I passed in thought,
And all my night awake I lay,
And tossed upon my bed, and brought
Imagination into play;
And in my fancy seemed to see
All sorts of things that could not be,
If looked at in the light of day.

Mayhap her form, in visions seen,
My wakefulness had put to flight,
And it went off with angry mien,
And scared me thus throughout the night.
Perchance some breeze, because I hide
Our secrets from it, sought her side,
And said she was forgotten quite!

I fear lest some one else may now
Have caused her love to swerve away;—
For 'tis the nature of the bough,
When young and fresh, to swerve and sway.
I think she seeks for something new;—
For when a shirt grows old, 'tis true
A man will change the same alway.

She loves but to be far from me,
I seek but only to be nigh:
Her neighbour did I chance to be,
From home to home I ween she'd fly!
I love her; now she's like the bough,
So slim and dusky-hued, and now
Like any fawn with lustrous eye!

The two gazelles[1], so bright and shy,
I ween she puts to shame the twain;
This, in the middle of the sky,
And that one of the desert plain.
Ah! for the heart that's never free
From woe, but sigheth wearily
For times that ne'er can come again.

And ah! this shadow of a frame,
Well-nigh burnt up with anguished fears,
Which would have burst into a flame
But for this constant flood of tears.
P. 216. And oh! the tale of love whose course
I hid, till tears revealed its source,
And passed it on to people's ears.

I love in humble guise to sit,
When tender passion moveth me;
But SALADIN will not permit
That I should ever humbled be!
Wherefore this dainty ode I sing—
Making a freewill offering,
Or ere I pay my fealty.

A monarch, through whose favour rare,
O'er monarchs I myself may tower,
Thereby I as a mantle wear
The garb of honour and of power.

[1] See note to p. 61.

I raise my voice aloud and cry,
O YÚSUF! and am answered by
  A monarch who his gifts doth shower.

Then, ere I scarce can turn my head,
  His favours all around I see,
And oh! to me so quickly sped.
  I've bent the branches of a tree
That yields the fruit of my request;
The udders of his gifts I've pressed,
  And copiously they yield to me.

O'er fortune, when its fickle fit
  Had vexed me sorely, did he gain
So great a victory, that it
  Now walks afoot among my train.
And when to count his gifts I came,
I found that glory, honour, fame,
  Were only part of what I gain.

In him we trace fair bounty's stream
  Unto the source from whence it spread:
The clouds of heaven only seem
  At second-hand those streams to shed!
His house exceeds the kings of earth
In happy fortune, noble birth,
  In kindness to forbearance wed.

The shoulders of the earth so fair,
  The day on which their cavalcade
Doth ride abroad, appear to wear
  A mantle decked with rich brocade;
Like lions in the fray they stand,
From out its sheath they draw the brand,
  And streams of blood gush o'er the blade.

Their bounty should ye e'er entreat,
  Like bounteous rain pours forth the stream;
But if ye in the fight should meet,
  Like lions with their whelps they seem.
To thee, my liege, this song I bear,
A virgin ditty, young and fair,
  That craves indulgence and esteem.

A mighty pile of praise she bore,
  'Twas but from this she tarried late:
Excuse her therefore, I implore,
  For tarrying thus from overweight.
P. 217. She knew her love for thee,—how fair
She was—so, with allurements rare,
  She comes thy sight to captivate.

A maiden fair of desert growth,
  Or else a maiden city-bred;
Of lavender and aloes, both,
  The odours are around her shed.
Had she but lived in bygone days,
Ziyár had never sung his lays,
  And Jerwal's fame had never spread.

This is a song of love and praise,
  And wondrous well of both I treat;
For wine is mingled in my lays
  With rippling water, pure and sweet.
And all the pearlèd notes I sing
Are deftly strung;—the fairest string
  Is when alternate contrasts meet.

O King! on whom kings humbly call,
  And to his presence access seek;
He rises high above them all
  In kindness and forbearance meek:

He gives them gifts with gracious mood:
He comes to them to do them good,
  Or ere they can their troubles speak.

Oh thou! of whom this eulogy
  Is all of it as true, as though
I read some scripture from on high:
  Oh thou! for whom my love, also,
Is plain as any text can be;
"Nor should we any meaning see
  In texts but what the words imply."

My life was very sweet with thee;
  I want none else, and even though
I did, no longer sweet 'twould be.
  I thank thee much, and yet I know
I cannot, whatsoe'er I say,
One-half my debt of thanks repay
  For all thy kindness—no, no, no!

TO A NEGLECTFUL FRIEND.

'Tis love that makes me speak so plain,
  But thou art good and gracious too;
The former friendship 'twixt us twain
  Should make thee ask me 'how I do!'
Then occupy thy mind with me,
E'en as my mind is never free
From thoughts of gratitude to thee.

THE RECKLESS LOVER.

P. 218. When the spiteful tell-tales doubt and wonder why I weep so sore,
I have such excuses as no lover ever made before.
And I use collyrium that is sharp and stinging to my eyes,
And pretend 'tis from its sharpness only that my tears arise.
Oh, my comrade! as for me, I prithee, do not fear in vain,
From a lover, such as I am, what can tell-tales hope to gain?
Only leave me and my Mentors to ourselves, and you shall see
Which of us, or I or they, shall first of scolding weary be!

ON A SLOW-PACED MULE.

My friend, your mule that goes so slow
Is not a creature worth a song.
Why, on the road it seems as though
'Twere hobbled as it walks along.
And when it presses on in haste
You'd fancy it did backward flinch;
The longest step it ever paced,
When hurrying, is not half an inch.
It shakes like any earthquake, though
It never budges from its place.
You're really very like it,—no,
It's like you! and I seem to trace
Some slight affinity of race;
For these you share between you both,
Bad breeding, foolishness, and sloth.

AN INVITATION.

My lord! upon a day like this P. 219.
You well know what your custom is.
Then, up! for now the dawn doth rise;
The day-star shineth in the skies:
And here are fresh-culled flowers, that shed
A fragrance which might wake the dead.
And we have a guest, also,
Whom I fancy that you know.
And a gentle page have we,
Bright and lustrous-eyed is he!
And many a dish, too, smelling sweet
As musk;—and not without the meat.
And a friend, whose kindness free,
And intellect must pleasing be.
A perfect wit, with learning graced,
With loftiest notions, nicest taste;
Good company, who ne'er displays
Aught that can merit aught but praise.
A singer, too, whose accents clear
Are sweet and perfect to the ear.
The pleasures which you here may meet,
Your presence only can complete.
Then come and pay a friendly call
On one who deems you all in all;
Who cares not, so you come to-day,
If all the world should stay away!

ABSENCE.

The world is strait whene'er thou art not nigh; P. 220.
  Its straits expand for me when thou art near.
After thy presence only do I sigh,
  Far from thy home, or when thou art not here.

TO A PATRON.

I have a house, where, should'st thou go,
  Thou'lt find thy bounteous gifts alone.
Who 'tis that lives there, would'st thou know?
  Thou'lt find but servants of thine own.

A PETITION.

Thy bounties o'er me stream for evermore,—
Lavish, when rain-clouds seem to stint their store.
Oft have I wished less burdensome to be,
But in these graceless days I've none but thee.
I have a mare, you know of what she's made,
I scarcely like to tie up such a jade!
She's hardly go left, to be up to weight
For bearing e'en her close impending fate.
Dumb as she is, she makes complaint of me,
But then her state speaks plainly as can be.
So thin she is, if she at night goes out,
You only see her bridle shake about.
P. 221. While by the eye nought but the cloak's descried,
On which her saddle and her girths are tied.
Daily she takes her drink without a meal,
But for that drink her fasting would be real.
For want of straw alone she's oft forlorn;
What must she be then for the want of corn!

ON RECEIVING A LETTER.

Your letter reached me; and, I feel,
It was extremely kindly meant;
Methought, when first I broke the seal,
'Twas some fair string of pearls you'd sent.

Its meaning too was very clear,
And delicate as softest air.
My faith and truth—ye friends so dear!—
Are just as firm as erst they were.

And, by your life! I love you well,
Aye! with the love I felt of yore;
A swain whose joy it is to dwell
Upon your memory evermore.

Who thrills with gladness at your sight,
For e'en the wise may gladsome be:
Then on you may my greeting light,
For oh! your love is safe with me!

AN ODE.

[To the Noble and Illustrious Emir Mejd ed dín ibn Isma'íl ibn el Lamṭí; congratulating him on the new year A.H. 629=A.D. 1231, and taking the opportunity to reproach him.]

You have promised, but will you redeem it, in fact? P. 222.
You have given your word, will you make it come true?
We have kept all our vows, while you break every pact;
Then how wide is the difference between us and you!

We waked to keep guard o'er your love, while you slept;
And 'tis not the same thing to sleep soundly and wake.
We agreed that our love should a secret be kept,
But the tell-tale induced you to speak, and you spake.

You were cruel and said, "You are cruel to me!"
  You were right,—that was what people said,—you were right.
Yet, dearest one! cruel or kind though you be,
  May I never, in any case, lose you from sight.

How many a night, through your love, do I pass
  "Building up and destroying my castles in air!"
Someone's taken to plaguing my poor heart, alas!
  Ah! would he some little compassion might bear.

Oh! 'tis not every eye that is sore like mine own,
  Not all hearts are enslaved by a passion so dire;
Other lovers' firm constancy time hath o'erthrown,
  They depart to forget, or remain but to tire.

Ah! dear friend, were I not thus prevented by shame,
  I would shout my complaint and conceal it no more.
And if someone would hear me, that someone I'd blame,—
  Nay, 'tis thou that I mean, and concealment is o'er!

P. 223. If, in love, my opponent my judge is to be,
  Unto whom shall I bring my complaint or my suit?
Were it not that my mentors are nothing to me,
  I would turn me to them to decide the dispute.

Ah! my Mentor, how wide is our parting! The tale
  Of my love exceeds all that is fancied, I fear.
I weep for a friend when his kindnesses fail—
  How much more when that friend is Our Noble Emir!

My Emir, by whose favour I triumphed of yore,
  And over the whole world appeared to hold sway;
I am patient,—not that 'tis less hard than before,—
  For these long nights of absence may yet pass away!

Said my foeman, "The Noble is angered, I find;"
  "Nay," said I, "for the Noble's too noble, I know:
"My Emir, when I'm absent, is evermore kind,
  "My Emir, if I'm present, is gracious, I trow."

His house, with a courteous welcome, I've shared;
  He connives at and pardons my follies so great.
He comes of a race, with whose favours compared
  Yelemlem and Yadhbul[1] are nothing in weight.

The tribe of all tribes for religion are they,
  Such a tribe as they are is, I warrant it, rare!
Talk of Músa or Ahmed as liberal! nay,
  But theirs was the heritage those did but share!

My lord! my retreat and my refuge art thou,
  Thou'rt too good and too mighty for me to complain:
Shall I dare to ignore thy great benefits now,
  When my flesh and my blood to confess them are fain?

By heaven! my gratitude never shall fail,
  'Tis enough that high Heaven knows best in the end.
Thou hast left me in absence thy loss to bewail, P. 224.
  But alas! after thee unto whom shall I wend?

For a land, where it palls on the senses to stay,
  Is poor, though its riches abundant may be:
And an age, whose vicissitudes drive me away,
  And part us, must always be hateful to me.

But God's earth it is wide, to roam whither I list!
  And God's gifts make me all independent and free!
Yet I know of thine absence the mark I have missed,
  Thou'rt above such a meanness, I warrant, like me!

[1] Mountains in Arabia.

To whom shall I fly in my need, but to thee,
Of all men? Nay, the fancy were foolish and vain.
No spot without thee would be pleasant to me,
Tho' the Station and Zemzem[1] my form should contain.

One like thou art will not feel the loss of a scribe,
While he at thy loss disappointment will feel.
Whom now wilt thou choose in my place, to inscribe
What thy wisdom inspires and he must not reveal?

And who shall delight thee, with intellect rare,
Thy words to perceive and thy hints to fulfil?
'Tis not every flower sheds sweet scent on the air,
Not every bird sings with melodious trill.

Oh! would that the year coming on would bestow
Thy favour upon us, whate'er else befall.
But the years they may come, and the years they may go,
With good works thou beginnest and endest them all!

The nights of the age are illumined by thee,
And its days, thanks to thee, thus with happiness smile!
Would I knew, if the Lord should thine absence decree,
Unto whom I need care this my verse to compile!

P. 225. 'Tis a love-song as pure as the chastest could sing,
An eulogy grand as the greatest e'er found,
A complaint mild as any soft Zephyr of spring,
A chiding as fair as pearls scattered around.

Though its good wishes come when the time has gone by,
I ween every day is the season with thee.
As thou knowest, unique in my epoch am I,
And though last, yet not least, my praise offering shall be!

[1] The Station of Abraham, a place so called within the precincts of the Kaabah. Zemzem is a holy well near Mecca.

A PANEGYRIC.

[On El Melik el 'Adil, Seif eddín, Abu Bekr ibn Aiyub. Composed at the Citadel of Damascus, A.H. 612=A.D. 1215.]

It evermore delights my heart,
When Love delayeth to depart;
Yet death appears the easiest part
Of what he makes me bear.
Strange! that with fate 'tis so content;
That such enjoyment should be lent
By that beloved one's image, sent
In dreams as light as air.

I loved him for his nature sweet,
His waist so slender and so neat,
His stature tall and stately, meet
To stir a lover's heart;
Enamoured of his melting eye,
With all its winning witchery,
Where Babel's spells appeared to lie,—
Its wine and magic art[1].

No "branch" in all the world is found
But what his flowing robes surround;
No "moon," but what his veil wraps round,
Appears to me to shine.
I'm envious whensoe'er I see
A sprig of the Aráka tree,
Or sweet beshám[2], come fragrantly
From out that mouth divine.

[1] Babylon is celebrated by Eastern writers for wine and sorcery.
[2] Plants from which *miswáks*, or tooth-sticks, are made; see note to p. 51.

I start whene'er the lightning plays
Around his dwelling, in amaze,
Because, methinks, the sudden blaze
    Darts from his smiling eye.
And eagerly do I inhale
The fragrance of the passing gale,
That tells me where on hill or dale
    My loved one's tents may lie.

The moon's bright influence seek, for he
Is its own brother, and 'twill be
An useful influence for me,
    And stand me in good stead
P. 226. With ″Adil, that auspicious king,
Who, if fell time should troubles bring,
Doth o'er each dark and wrongful thing
    His rays of justice shed.

A monarch, whose majestic air
Fills all the range of sight, whose care
Fills all the regions everywhere!
    Who such a watch doth keep,
That, save what in his sword doth lie,
The glances of his piercing eye—
Like keenest falchions as they fly—
    Know neither rest nor sleep[1].

[1] In this verse I have found it impossible to preserve the literal translation and the original play upon words as well. It should be rendered as follows:

"A watchful sentinel whose eye (or sword) knows no slumber (or edge) but what his falchion contains."

Substituting the word "lance" for "sword" it might be paraphrased thus:

That save when he doth set his lance
In *rest* to check the foes advance,
His eye with bright and piercing glance
    Knows neither *rest* nor sleep.

The songs of all the bards that are
Would of thy praise fall short by far,
E'en though with many a brilliant star
Their verses they indite.
O monarch of the age! give ear;
Thou who art quite without a peer,
As one from whom to hope or fear
His pardon or his spite.

The fame of bounty has been known
Amongst mankind before thine own;
But this, which thou hast lately shewn,
Hath sealed it up for aye.
Safe in the shelter of thine arm,
From Fortune I need fear no harm,
Though other men may feel alarm
At her capricious sway.
From every trouble safe am I;
Then let the peace of God on high
Together with my greeting fly,
And rest on thee for aye!

PERPLEXED.

I love a moon I will not name,
A full moon, call her what you may.
She puts my mentors all to shame;
They talk and know not what they say.

For loving her, on every side
I'm blamed, though little love I gain.
Oh moon! since thou hast left my side,
My star is ever on the wane.

Oh fairest of all creatures! thou
  Wilt ne'er consent to wrong me so.
P. 227. Seest thou not what I suffer now?
Thou wilt not such a sin allow!
  Ah! what to do I do not know!
I cannot, sure, prefer my suit,
To one with whom I'm in dispute.

LINES.

[At the heading of a letter.]

This comes from one who loves you well,
With love beyond what words can tell;
So worn is he with longing great,
His very speech is delicate!
His greeting also, as one sees,
Is gentle as a summer-breeze.

THE CANDID LOVER.

Yes, the spiteful folks are right in what they state,
I am mad with love for her, infatuate!
Let them say whate'er they may who choose to blame,
I do love her dearly, and I feel no shame.
Passion seized me which I feared not to reveal,
Only what can be concealed do I conceal.
Mentors to dissuade me now no longer try;
"Now the matter 's settled and the pen is dry."
Who will pity me, to him my plaint I make;
I complain to those alone who pity take.
Of my poor heart's safety I am in despair,
For that heart those eyes of hers will never spare.

Ye who ask about the love for which I grieve,
Verily 'tis greater than ye can conceive!
Good or bad about us, whatsoe'er we hear, P. 228.
Sweet is even calumny for one so dear.
I have spoken plainly, answering each demand;
'Tis to thee I speak, thou who canst understand.
Lengthened in the course of true love is my woe;
Thou, O Lord! alone dost my condition know.
Men have loved before; but none was e'er like me,
Know that I amongst them all shall famous be.
And the tale of love has oft ere this been writ,
Now the perfume of my story sealeth it.

A GREETING.

[To some Friends in Egypt.]

Peace on her, who will not deign
To return the wish again.
Ah! in her esteem, 'tis plain,
My place is very low.
Thus on one I will not name,
I have dared to utter blame.
Gracious Lord! those words of shame
Let her never know!

Between us both, in times long past,
How love and honour used to last,
How many a bond then bound us fast!
'Tis right, upon the whole,
That thou should'st cross and angry be,
When thou my senseless love canst see—
The passion which I feel for thee
And cannot e'en control.

I've guarded well the love I bore,
Though thou regardest it no more;
Lo! here it is laid up in store,
And with my seal unbroke.
I've yearned for thee by night and day,
Still murmuring of thy name alway,
When on my bed asleep I lay,
And eke when I awoke.

Oh! prithee, dear one, do not fail
To note the fragrance of the gale
That passes; thou wilt so inhale
My greeting on it borne.
Oh! tell me shall not my envoy
Return again to me with joy,—
Joy, like that when a baby boy
Is to a mother born.

P. 229. My heart delights in Egypt fair,
And all the dear friends living there,
With whom, all blithe and free from care,
I've passed such happy days.
And oh! I love to seek repose
Beside the Nile, because it flows
Hard by the dwelling-place of those
Who treat me well always.

THE SENSITIVE HANDKERCHIEF.

This pocket-handkerchief of mine,—
So fine, you can't perceive the same,—
Whene'er I tell it how I pine
For love of one I will not name;

Ask it, not me, then, how I fare,
For it can all my ills declare;
It drinks the tears that bathe mine eyes,
It sees my flames of passion rise.

THE CLERICAL BORE.

If ever we say, "we are settled at last,"
His reverence enters, for sure;
And every one of us is then and there cast
Into boredom, and rendered demure.
At our meetings he stammers and stutters; in fine
A stopper he puts on us all.
And, to sum up the matter, that reverend divine
A bore and a nuisance I call.

DULL CARE.

You who feel dull care to-day, P. 230.
Know that it can ne'er endure;
E'en as joys soon pass away,
So do cares, you may be sure.

Hard although may seem our fate,
God is merciful we see.
If the trouble seems too great,
Greater the reward will be.

AN INVITATION.

The breeze o'erhead is soft and light,
Then come to us, my comrade dear!
Seest thou not how of murky night
The broidered patterns disappear?

Yon dawn, methinks, is like a stream,
  Wherein the very stars are drowned;
Illumine then with wine's bright beam
  The night, while yet a trace is found.

Yon sun on high anticipate
  With one no cloud can cover up,—
With liquor fine and delicate
  As any Zephyr in the cup!

The "daughter of the grape-vine"; kind
  To men of noble birth alone:
Upon the clay of which we find
  The seals of ages past and gone.

To which the Magian, as they tell,
  The very highest honour pays;
P. 231 To which the monk in hermit cell,
  With deep devotion fasts and prays.

Too small a price, I will be bound,
  He sets on it, whate'er it be!—
And then the page who hands it round
  Is fair of speech and fair to see;

Well practised on you to attend,
  To bring you all you want or crave,
Dear comrade! and as firm a friend,
  And true as you could wish to have.

And not a thing in him you'll see
  Unpleasant or inopportune;
A good musician too have we,
  Well skilled in every mood and tune;
And if you'll join the company,
  Complete indeed our joy will be!

UNREQUITED LOVE.

She spake, and from her mouth divine
An odour as of fragrant wine
Came breathing; and her merry smile
Like sparkling bubbles gleamed the while.
And, like the branch, she swerved and swayed
Intoxicate, and far from staid.
Oh! lightning, wilt thou not impart
To her the story of my heart,
And how its fires burn up and blaze?
And thou, O Zephyr! go thy ways,
And from my mouth this message bear
Straight to that mouth of hers so fair.
I wonder much that she should be
So very niggardly with me,
When other folks do nought but praise
Her generous and noble ways.
Can Some-one else have taught her, pray,
That thus from me she turns away?
Lord! for it make her teacher pay!

THE COMPLAISANT WIND.

I do declare that gust of air P. 232.
Relieved me of a load of care.
A damsel's dress it chose to seize,—
Whom I, alas! could never please,—
Revealing, in that maid's despite,
A well-turned ankle to my sight!

A FAREWELL.

Spite of myself I leave thee now;
'Tis God's will, not mine own, I vow.
Whence came the hard decree to part?
'Twas never in my mind or heart.
These partings still my horror are,
Such is my planet, such my star!
'Twas not the first blow Absence dealt,
This cheek full many a slap has felt!
At Fortune's wrongs I'll not repine,
These accidents are in my line!
But things mine enemies have told,
Increase my troubles manifold.

LINES.

[Written by request to be engraved upon a sword.]

P. 233. For the laws of the fight,
And the foeman to smite,
In the hand of a hero of valour and might.
In his palm will it seem
Like the lightnings that gleam,
Destructive and keen, through the darkness of night.

A PETITION.

Let my greeting come to one I will not name,
One for love of whom all people give me blame:
One so fair that all in her is fair to see,
E'en the bright full moon is not so fair as she.
Long, to hide my passion from her was I fain,
Yet my heart was all the while her love-sick swain.

Now I kiss her hand, while for her lips I yearn,
Since by bashfulness I'm forced from her to turn.
Oft I ask, yet from her not a word get I;
'Tis as though it were unlawful to reply.
She pretends she will not speak, and all the while,
Spite of her coquetting, she is forced to smile;
And she seems intoxicate with pride, in short,
'Tis as though that wine were making her its sport.
Master mine! how canst thou wish to murder me,
When I have a right of tutelage from thee!
Thou! my life, if thou wouldst kill me, can I blame
Other people, even if they wish the same?
I but ask a thing of which much need have I,
Yet while I recount it, years and years go by.
Send an answer then, whatever thou dost choose; P. 234.
Words are surely not unlawful things to use!
Now I've told the secrets that I kept before.
Such is my condition: I will say no more.

ON A LETTER.

O'er your writing as long did I linger,
  So soon as your letter came round,
"As a miser, if off from his finger
  "A signet had dropped on the ground."

A letter, wherein such fair changes
  Of words and expressions are met,
'Tis as when some skilled craftsman arranges
  Bright rubies and pearls in a set.

And such perfume and beauty 'tis shedding
  About the apartment the while,
That it seems like a garden-flower spreading
  Its petals around with a smile.

How my longing and care, as I con it
  Are doubled, God only can know;
And down from my eyelids upon it
  The tear-drops as readily flow,

As when a man kind and free-hearted
  Beholdeth a guest at his door,
And his udders of bounty, once started,
  Ungrudgingly yield up their store.

THE HIGH PRIEST OF LOVE.

May Heaven to him a blessing send,
  From whom to me a blessing came!
And may the generous clouds expend
Their fertile influence o'er that friend,
  Whose name I do not choose to name.

And if I, as perchance I may,
  Should die through loving him too well,
What blame shall I deserve, I pray,
Or what can men about me say?
  I'm bound by love's most potent spell!

Ah Mentor! for a friend so dear
  A love like mine is good to meet.
P. 235. But if thy chiding I must hear,
Then name him plainly to my ear;—
  That name will make thy chiding sweet!

Inquire of love from none but me,
  For Love's own Great High Priest am I:
My sect by all shall followed be.
Thou lover! lo, I say to thee,
  There shall be no love when I die.

Oh! is it love within my breast?
  Or burning? or a blazing fire?
All fires, save one alone, are blest
And "cool and safe" whereon to rest,—[1]
  All save the fire of strong desire.

A VISIT.

She came when all were sleeping sound—
  Oh! greet the fair full moon from me.
She came, although in her were found
  Such shyness, grace, and modesty.

This visit she was fain to pay,
  Through kindness she to me did bear.
Could it have been a dream, I pray?
  If so, a happy dream it were!

The Moon, when in her fullest phase,
  I kissed in night's profound retreat!
I clasped the branch that swerves and sways,
  All drunken with love's wine so sweet!

Thou! who wouldst blame the love I bear,
  Blame borne for her is sweet to me!
But one who has a love so fair,
  From every blame should sacred be.

LINES.

[Addressed to the Count Jemál ed dín Yahyá 'bn Maṭrúḥ, who had taken some medicine.] P. 236.

May'st thou be saved from every pain;
And full of joy for aye remain,

[1] Alluding to the story of Abraham, who was thrown unharmed into a fiery furnace by Nimrod; "And we said, O fire! be cool and safe for Abraham." Corán, ch. 21, v. 69.

In perfect health, whose youthful flower
Shall last until old age's hour.
May bounty, Yahyá, live in thee,
As, thanks to thee, dies poverty.
Now, after this preamble, say
What was the matter with thee, pray?

LOVE ALL IN ALL.

Mine eye it knows not slumber sweet,
  Oh, come again, thou vision bright!
I am not satisfied to meet
  My love in nought but dreams by night.

Her in my waking hours I see,
  No matter if I sit or stand;
To right of me,—to left of me,—
  Behind,—before,—on every hand.

In secret thoughts, in public strife,
  In speech or silence, is she seen.
My own sweet flower,—my very life,
  My wine,—my comrade has she been.

Thou, who my love for her wouldst blame,
  Thy blaming, prithee, do not cease.
P. 237. Each time that thou dost name her name,
  My passion for her doth increase!

Men censure love, and yet, I ween,
  It is the mark of noble race;
Save in the lovers I have seen,
  Nought of humanity I trace!

A WELCOME.

The timid Envoy, fearing blame,
Used Suʿda's for Imámá's name;
And, hinting at fair Rama, said,
"Be showers of rain o'er Ramoth shed."
But I his hint could well divine,
My loved one thus had sent a sign.
I joyed till I began to think
I had become the sport of drink!
Oh Envoy! my last cupful take,
I'm Love's own Kaʿab[1] for her sweet sake.
Thy story once again repeat,
No ring-dove's note is half so sweet.
Hurrah! for folks with prying eyes
To-day a Day of Wrath doth rise!
Thou, from thy journey coming here
After so long an absence, dear,
Peace be on thee! though thou didst stay,
So gladly, all this time away.
Oh thou! to whom alone belong,
My Lord! my love and passion strong;—
Oh thou! who fain wouldst humble me,
While I am fain to honour thee!
My Lord is King of all that's fair, P. 238.
Yet ne'er to right my wrongs doth care.
I saw him, and he seemed to be
Just like the branch of some fair tree,
In pliancy and symmetry.
Upon his cheek, yon mole, so dark,
'Mongst lovers makes me one of mark.

[1] See p. 31, l. 16.

The contours of his form so fair,
Who now will venture to compare
With them the undulating ground
In Nejd and in Tehámah found[1]?

THE LOVER'S APPEAL.

Fair neighbour! neighbours' rights are great, be sure.
Thy neighbour, daughter of a noble race!
Is noble too. His love, so true and pure,
Shall please thee, and thou shalt regard with grace
His friendship firm, which nought shall e'er efface.
There is no doubt, praise be to God above!
In love like mine, that friends and comrades true
Should e'er reproach me for my want of love.
Now by my life, thou givest life anew
To one whom love had left all dead and cold;
And all that longing thou dost now renew,
Which I had fancied obsolete and old.
Now, by thy love! my heart no rest can get
From youthful ardour; and this passion dread
Remains its dreaded creditor e'en yet.
The ring-dove coos, and lo! my tears I shed:
The soft breeze blows, my love is fanned again.
I am a poet, so the people say;
For love of thee "in every vale I stray[2]!"
Love's cup is bitter as the dregs I drain;
I taste love's torments, they are fraught with pain!
Oh you I love! have ye not one heart there
That will take pity on me? Form divine
Of her I name not, through my jealous care!
And, through whose love, unrest is ever mine!

[1] *Nejd*, the highlands, and Tehámah, the lowlands of Arabia.

[2] Corân, ch. 20. v. 224, 225. "And those who err follow the steps of the poets. Dost thou not see that in every vale they stray?"

And, O sweet home! wherein whene'er I stray, P. 239.
A lustrous-eyed soft young gazelle is there
To hold sweet converse with me. Lord, I pray,
Save from her drooping eyes her stature fair;
For those that droop with languor, people say,
Impart it to the sound and straight alway.
Tell me, dear friend, what purpose now is thine?
For a great favour I should deem it now.
In loving thee no fault at all was mine,
Or if there were, yet clement still art thou.
Come, make a compact, be it what it may.
Famous and rich in keeping faith am I:
The love between us I will guard for aye,
Even when rotting 'neath the mould I lie.
Error is guidance, if for love of thee;
Misery, to please thee, seemeth joy to me!

TRUE LOVE.

I am you yourself, 'tis true!
This is my belief in you.
But my love is all my own,
Yours is all the hatred shewn.
I had ne'er your love revealed,
Were it what might be concealed.
Nay, by heaven, but I was wrong,
My love is far too pure and strong.
I'll weep for you,—and 'twere but fair,
If drops of blood that weeping were.
Shall I keep back this loving tear
For one more precious or more dear?
Most precious of mankind are you
To me, aye! and most generous too.
What have I done, that I should cleave P. 240.
To faithfulness while you deceive?

And this from you!—Now will I grieve
No more, whatever falls on me
From foemen, foemen though they be!
Nay! thou whose name I will not speak,
May God forbid that thou shouldst wreak
Thy spite or tyranny on me.
Whom have I in the world but thee,
To take compassion on my pain,
If I of tyranny complain?
And who, when I am slain by thee,
Will ever weep or mourn for me?
I die of love for thee!—Alive
And hearty may'st thou ever thrive!

FAITHLESSNESS.

Thou turnest from me, shunning me!
Nay but thou wilt not break thy vow!
My Lord! what have I done that thou
Shouldst grudge me e'en a word from thee?
Oh! such a thing I did not deem
That I should see in e'en a dream!
Oh! greet me as thou'rt passing by;
It is the least that one can do.
Why should I deem thee faithful? why,
When thou art but a mortal too?
All natures are to treachery prone;
I am not blaming thee alone.
How many mentors do I see
Who blame me for my love of thee,—
And for my ardent passion's flame!
Perchance I may my love conceal;
But how to hide the pangs I feel,
When thus they enervate my frame?

GRATITUDE.

Kind patron! with thanks I am ready and willing; P. 241.
And thanks are a debt 'tis incumbent to pay:
My hand with thy bounty thou'rt evermore filling,
And my mouth will I fill with thy praises alway.
Though I thank him, his bounty foreseeth my needs,
"And the glory is always of that which precedes."

LOST LABOUR.

You who are to this service attending,—
Ugh! there's something so horrid about it!
Your labour in vain you are spending;
You might still earn a mouthful without it.
You worry,—his interest advancing,
Who will never your energy mark;
You might just as well have been dancing
A saraband all in the dark!

HYPOCRISY.

How many folks a virtuous sanctity pretend,
And turn from what is right as well as what is wrong;
They eat but little,—feign a deep devotion,—spend
All their time in fasting and in praying long.
But as soon as ever they the chance obtain,
Live the life of an "Unfortunate" again.

CANDOUR.

P. 242. "The murder's out!" said I, "take this
"Without the least reserve from me;
"There's nothing left about you, miss!
"For good or bad, that I can see."

CONGRATULATORY ODE.

[Addressed to the Sheikh, Dr. Nejm ed dín el Báderání, Commissioner of the Privy Council, and making excuses for not having been present to receive him when he arrived in Egypt to pacify the country, in A.H. 654 or, according to another account, in A.H. 644 = A.D. 1256 or 1246].

Fair be thine auspices, thou guest most dear!
Thrice welcome to the noble and renowned!
Thou comest, thank Heaven! and thy coming here
Will in our *fête* days evermore be found.
Thou comest, lo! the world grows bright, and beams
With cheerful face and brightest smile around.
May Heaven now bless thy mission, for it seems
Holier than that of those who seek to lay
Their sins at Mecca's holy shrine. Meseems,
So many a trouble hast thou charmed away
By thy fair words, there seems some truth to be
In what of charms and magic spells they say.
How fair a cavalcade escorted thee!
What goodly gifts thy camels hither bore!
Not like Numeirí's cavalcade to see,
Nor like Aná'im or Naká of yore!
Forgive me, Sir, for that becomes thee well;
Shouldst thou forgive not, 'twould not wrong me sore.
P. 243. Would that mine eye might on thy visage dwell,
To quench the thirst of longing in my breast!

The need I feel to see thee, truth to tell,
  When thou for aught my presence dost request,
At once obtains the mastery over me.
  By Heaven! my love for thee unchanged doth rest;
In such an oath there is no blasphemy.
  I stay behind, yet in thy journeying
My heart for aye accompanieth thee.
  Thy slave will be the foremost, when in state
Thy servants stand around thee in a ring;
  The most sincere of those who on thee wait.
Shouldst thou but ask, thou'lt find him there at hand,
  The first of those who throng thy palace-gate.
If not, inquire of all thy steeds, that stand
  By night throughout the darkness and the mist:
Thou'lt find the hoofs of each one in the band
  Worn down from having been so often kissed!

ESCAPE.

Fate drove me to your door, alack!
  And threw me in your clutches,—you!
But very quickly I got back.—
  The devil take all such as you!

EPIGRAM.

His lordship's horses and his men,
  A pack of dogs and bones are they.
They're so much money lost; but then,
  What could you have expected, pray,
  Of money got in such a way?

ON RECEIVING AN APPLE.

P. 244.

She sent me an apple; 'tis marked, I presume,
With a heart where her heart doth hold sway;
And upon it is written in sweetest perfume,
"Accept, dear, my greeting, I pray!"

A LETTER.

I write this, that it may declare
How very much I long for thee;
And to thee I have bid it bear
A million services from me.
Oh! thou whose care to all extends,
May I ne'er be without that care;
Thou leavest me, oh best of friends!
With gifts and favours without end!

UNMENTIONABLE.

There's such an one I think you know,
So there's no need to name him;
I wouldn't in your presence say
The things for which folks blame him.
"And then I have an ear as well,
That's deaf to all that's horrible."

ON A NEWLY-APPOINTED GOVERNOR.

P. 245.

I know a governor so mean,
He's each man's detestation.
He's gone quite crazy, since he's been
Appointed to the station:

A station, where there are but few
Whose friendship has been won by him.
There's not a creature ever knew
Of any kindness done by him.

Now, when I saw him sinking fast,
In this tumultuous ocean,
I said, "Ere many days are past,
"You'll see him, I've a notion,

"In such a plight, that even they
"Who envy now will feel for him."
But curse on everyone, I say,
Who shares or dares to deal with him.

AN APOLOGY.

Now, by thy troth, thine absence, dear,
Can never change my love for thee,
Though times may change and fortune veer.
Then, prithee, do not deign to hear
What such an one may say of me.

The selfsame faith to thee I show;
In safety doth our friendship rest.
None other hath usurped, I trow,
Thy place in my affections,—no,
There's room for all within my breast!

But through my strong, deep love for thee,
  I scorn the scorn with which I'm met. P. 246.
A truce to scolding; it may be,
Mine eye shall yet some comfort see;
  My soul some slight repose may get.

Oh fair to me the foulest deed,
  If but by thee such deed be shown!
So doth a fragrant smell proceed
From burning incense; though indeed
  It is but smoke, and smoke alone!

God bless those dear ones, far away!
  To whom I was so true, alack!
And they to me. How oft I say,
"I will at length a visit pay;"
  But fate for ever holds me back.

Fate seems, in many a grave affair,
  A beast one cannot lead or drive.
I did intend; and 'tis but fair
The credit of intent to bear
  Till opportunity arrive!

DRINKING SONG.

Here, take it, 'tis empty! and fill it again
  With wine that's grown old in the wood;
That in its proprietor's cellars has lain
So long, that at least it goes back to the reign
  Of the famous Noshírwán the Good—

With wine, which the jovial friars of old
  Have carefully laid up in store,
In readiness there for their feast-days to hold—
With liquor, of which if a man were but told,
  He'd roll away drunk from the door!

So brilliant that, if 'twere allowed to be seen,
'Twould guide a blind man to its place!
And though 'tis a fire, yet it never has been
Kindled up in the cup, but the fire of chagrin
Has been quenched without leaving a trace!

Oh! the greatest of monarchs is nothing, I ween,
Till he's drunk with the liquor divine!
It raises the lowly, makes liberal the mean,
And the veriest coward that ever was seen
Would grow brave with such glorious wine!

The damsel who goes to and fro with the glass,
Shames the pliant young branch of the tree;
With so graceful and gentle an air does she pass.
I'll drink all the night with a merry young lass, P. 247.
Who's both lovely and loving to me!

She's perfect in beauty and fresh as the tree
That waves o'er Arabia's sand.
Like a timid and thirsty gazelle, too, is she,
As with rose-tinted fingers she's drinking to me,
From the rose-tinted wine in her hand.

I've a glorious comrade; no others I'd choose
In his stead, let them be who they may.
Such pleasant and flowery discourse does he use,
That if you and he ever should join in a boose,
"He's a perfect flower-garden," you'll say!

So sweet is his speech, if he sings you an air,
Not a single false note will you hear.
He who knows him will never know trouble or care,
And the comrade who chances his bottle to share,
Has nothing unpleasant to fear.

DEAR AS A BROTHER.

To thee I grieve, because thou art my brother,
And both of us are in the selfsame case.
We've dropped all ceremony towards each other,
Thy folk are my folk, and thy place my place!

A brother he, whose faith his love attesteth;
Who grieves with thee at each unlucky chance;
And who against the call of care protesteth
With wealth and those keen reasoners, sword and lance!

How oft when fortune was against me fighting,
I've wielded thee, a keen-edged Yemen blade!
Ne'er in our intercourse, nor in requiting
Thy gifts, have I ingratitude displayed.

Thy favours came so swift of foot unto me,
Or ere misfortunes could my dwelling reach:
P. 248. I'll thank their showers for all the good they do me,
With purest friendship and with purest speech.

And yet, full well I know, fate has bereft me
Of power to thank thee for such gifts as thine:
No friend but thee in all the world is left me,—
Mayhap thou still wilt be a friend of mine.
I have not strength to suffer, sooth to tell,
Deceit from fortune and a friend as well!

A PANEGYRIC.

[On El Melik el Mesûd, Saláḥ ed dín, Abu Muẓaffar Yúsuf ibn el Melik el Kámil, Mohammed ibn Abi Bekr bin Aiyúb, on his arrival from Yemen, A.H. 620=A.D. 1221—1222.]

Where'er thou art thou hast both place and power,
  A kingdom to which kings bow down, and sway.
Thy camp is pitched in Glory's loftiest bower,
  Where midst the heavens thou dost dwell alway.
These are not stars or rain-clouds which we see;
  Thy shining face and bounteous gifts are they!
Lo! on the throne victorious sitteth he,
  Famed for great deeds, alert in enterprise;
In standard and in council he shall be
  The "King Auspicious[1]", as his name implies!
Mankind and genii bow beneath his rule:
  Beneath the weight of empire doth he rise,
While other kings are but as lads at school!
  When his name sounds, the pulpit's planks all thrill;—
Is it the memory of days fair and cool,
  When erst they waved as saplings by the rill?
And when his reed-pen spatters o'er the scroll,
  It seems as though it would the *rôle* fulfil
Of Moses' rod, and turn into a snake!
  His speech, such magic permeates the whole, P. 249
It needs must please; his papers, too, do take
  Such pleasing forms, they seem like gardens fair.
How many an aim, though grim Death for the sake
  Of keeping off assailants sitteth there,
Doth he assay, while Death looks in dismay!
  Where in the fight the sword-edge speaks, and where
The lance-point watches eager for the fray!
  A rosy, ruddy cheek doth he adore;

[1] This is the translation of the Arabic El Melik el Mesûd.

Aye, when his sharp swords such red cheeks display!
God bless the ships that brought him to our shore,
Great obligations on us do they place;
Such passing beauty for their freight they bore,
They seemed like beauty-spots on Ocean's face!
The sea upheaves not as he journeyeth here,
'Tis but the restlessness of fear we trace,
Inspired by him! So, too, its roars we hear
Are caused by fright, its heart beats loud and high
Because our sovereign fills it thus with fear!
Great King! whose favours are to all men nigh,
In whom nought else but favour can be found,
Thou comest, a lion in thy majesty!
Thou comest, a rain-cloud showering gifts around!
Egypt was longing for thy coming here,
'Tis men like thee towards whom all countries bound!
Yearning for thee, her Nile pours forth a tear,
For thee, the dove is trilling in the grove.
And when the news at length had reached her ear
That thou wert coming, then with joy and love
A song of praise rang in her face so bright.
The feast-day, also, met thee there, to prove
That thou therein shalt long take thy delight!
Behold what joy thy coming now doth bring,—
Herein Damietta and Aswán unite!
The leaves are rustling, and the ring-doves sing,
The branches dance, the pools of water smile;
P. 250. The fields spread verdant carpets for their king,
With many a flower to variegate the pile.
Where'er thou art, fair meads shall greet thine eye,
Where'er thou art, sweet herbs the way beguile.
Within her realm if any beauties lie,
Thy coming shows those beauties off the more.
Egypt! thy Joseph once more cometh nigh!
Oh Nile! a deluge bursts upon thy shore!
When thou alightest there, such rays proceed

Out of Earth's face, it seems as though she bore
  In thee the substance of the holy creed
Of Him whose Unity we all adore!
  For from all sin and evil thou art freed,
And hast a fervent jealousy displayed
  For faith and orthodoxy, and dost lead
Thy horsemen all victorious to their aid,
  Until thine eagles boldly fly away
E'en with the fiercest lion of the glade.
  At thy fell purpose doth Earth fear alway,
And Thellán trembles, Thellán though it be[1].
  Earth's heart is filled with terror at thy sway,
Bagdad and far Khorassan quake at thee;
  There in the pass a hostile tribe did dwell,
Who showed rebellion and disloyalty;
  But thou didst quiet the outbreak so well,
That, when the breeze o'er No'mán's valley blew,
  No No'mán blossom[2] stirred, the tale to tell.
No eye amongst them any slumber knew,
  And if a vision did by chance come there,
Away again it in a passion flew.
  May God above accept each humble prayer,
Which in both Sanctuaries[3] is made for thee
  By Pilgrims and by every dweller there.
'Amer and 'Antar, shall they mentioned be
  When thou dost show thy prowess in the war?
Khusrá and Khákán, what are they to me!
  They say that lances brown and thirsty are,—
Behold, the lance thou holdest in thy right
  Appears too moist, too ruddy-cheeked by far!
I hoped to visit thee some murky night,— P. 251.
  That chance then lost how deeply I deplore.
I buoy my soul with hope and promise light,
  But ah! the time for that is long passed o'er.

[1] Name of a mountain. [2] A species of Anemone. [3] Mecca and Jerusalem.

High rank from all but thee, however grand,
  Is but disgrace; and life is nothing more
Than sheer starvation, from another's hand!
  Hope told me of success in store for me—
But, "far lies Thule from Arabia's land."
  Erewhile my Yemen-brand I used to see
Flashing like lightning in the dead of night,
  And now it quivers through my love for thee
As though I were intoxicated quite!
  I scent the Southern breezes, and I sigh
As I inhale them, like some love-sick wight;
  Not that upon my heart a spell doth lie
From this or that land, but there is a spell
  In Mesŭd's bounty for humanity!
A glorious youth! such as the land might well
  Choose to reign over it; a meadow fair,
Where *sa'dán* groweth, such as, sooth to tell,
  Would augur well for all who pasture there!
He is no stranger who with thee doth roam,
  For thy companionship would everywhere
Provide him with a family and a home!
  God shortens now the leagues that used to lie
Between us twain; and lo! one palace-dome
  Covers us both. I saw him come, yet I
Doubt if 'tis real, and like one half awake,—
  Half dreaming, pass my hand across mine eye!
Will he who brought the news consent to take
  My heart for guerdon, with its cares and woe?
The day I met him, for that glad day's sake
  I will be grateful to this age, although
It always has been treacherous to me!
  His is the race for victory, and I see
None that can touch him; though in times of yore
  There lived brave knights far famed for chivalry.
The steeds Ghabrá and Dáhis are no more,
  Though there are foemen who more hatred bear,

Than ever 'Abs or Dhubyán did before[1].
  When I am gone no songster shall be there;—
Here is a plain wherein your steeds to try!
  With Zemzem's fount no other source compare, P. 252.
For No'mán's valley pass all others by!
  Not every land is like the flowery mead;
Not every tree is pleasing to the eye
  As is the weeping willow; nor, indeed,
Can any bard so please thee with his praise,
  As I, not even if you choose to read
Great Selmán's, or the far-famed Hassan's lays.
  Let those who can, sing such sweet strains, I ween!
Kings, too, like SALADIN, in these our days
  Are only met with few and far between!

ON PARTING WITH FRIENDS[2].

Dear comrades! pray tell me for which of the twain
  I must long, when you're both far away?
One longing, I ween, would be quite enough pain
  For me to support any day!

Dear comrades! my love for you both is the same
  As the passion you formerly knew.
Dear comrades! now say, is there any such flame
  Still existing in either of you?

Dear comrades! you've seen, and you've heard what is said,—
  Where to find one like me will ye go?
You've renewed my desire long forgotten and dead,
  And Love's season gone by long ago!

[1] A great war arose between the two tribes 'Abs and Dhubyán from a dispute about a race between two horses called Ghabrá and Dáḥis. See the Commentary.

[2] See note 2, p. 187.

Methought, on the day that I bade you goodbye,
The raven of parting flew past;
And it made my heart quake, though so faithful am I,
That my love through misfortunes will last!

Yon Nile overflowing its banks which ye see,
Only does so because of my tears;
'Tis the "Sea heaveth up as it meeteth with sea,"
Of which in the Coran[1] one hears!

IMPROMPTU.

P. 253. [Fakhr ed dín Cádhí of Daráya recited to him one of his own verses, and asked him to make a verse upon it. The Cádhí's couplet is the last.]

Oh moon! who dost o'er all things shine
With that clear brilliant light of thine,
Great God!—thy horns[2] thou dost display,
And ages numberless are they!
"How many faces dost thou see,
"How many an eye looks up to thee!"

PIOUS COUNSEL.

Whate'er thou dost, unto the Lord be frank therein,
And let thy secret and thy public acts agree!
Each thought on anything but Allah is a sin,
The mention of aught else forgetfulness will be!

[1] Corán, ch. 55, v. 19.

[2] The same word قرون means "centuries" and "horns."

LOVE'S SECRETS.

Folks heard all we talked about,
Broached the thing and had it out.
With the "Moon" the night I passed;
What we did we left at last.
Youth its call upon us made,
And we heard it and obeyed.
And we made that sure, I ween,
Which had but suspected been.
Her may Heaven bless and save, P. 254.
Who the hope of meeting gave.
I've a love, for whom I gain
All I hoped I might attain.
Moon-like she her light displays;
Branch-like still she swerves and sways.
She was in a rage, but then
Came and made it up again.
Still she scolds, but, lack-a-day!
She is right to scold away.
She possesses beauties rare,
But a deeper sense is there.
Who a love like mine can find,
Beauteous as well as kind?
Come and tell me now, I pray,
What has Mentor got to say.
We do not his business ask,
Why should he take us to task?

BAD REPUTE.

I've a friend who's gone away;
Who he is I will not say.
But the tales I of him hear,
God from such things keep us clear!

Oft as I avoid the matter,
All the more the people chatter.
This I mention to remind him
I have ne'er played false behind him.

THE REQUEST.

P. 255. Thrice welcome, my loved one's kind envoy! to me—
Thou who bringest so pleasant a greeting.
My beloved one, thou didst but quite recently see,
While so long has elapsed since our meeting!

Tell the story once more thou didst tell me just now;
'Twill soothe heart and eye when I hear it.
Oh sweet is the message she sent me; and thou—
Well and bravely, I trow, didst thou bear it!

But time, may God bless you! prohibiteth me
By its turns, so I've given up sadly.
And the favour thou askest me, was not to be,
Or, by God! I had granted it gladly!

Alas! 'tis a favour I see not my way
To granting, i'faith how I rue it!
Fate keeps me from seeing my loved one, then pray
Tell me, how, when, and where I can do it?

PETULANCE.

Oh thou branch of silver rare!
Thou whose eyes are bright and fair!
All that thou wouldst have of me
On my head and eyes shall be.

Naught from thee my heart can gain,
But "the slippers of Honein[1];"—
Yet my hands, my foes believe,
Are full of favours I receive!
Fairest one! who treatest me P. 256.
To absence or inconstancy!
Back or front, whiche'er she shows,
What two potent spells are those
Hind or fore, whiche'er it be,
Fair from every point is she.
She's a moon whose light divine
Right from East to West doth shine;
Or a book with Beauty writ
Clear on every page of it.
Who will do a charity,
Going 'twixt my love and me?
Two whole nights, through temper, she
Hasn't said a word to me!

AN APOLOGY.

I've heard a thing that I would fain have seen
To make mine eye glad, as mine ear hath been.
By thy good name, oft noised abroad by me,
By favours shown unselfishly by thee,—
Thou, whose society alone makes glad,—
Thy friend is longing, but is also sad!
Come, make it up! that none between us twain
May step, and scandal-mongers watch in vain!
We both were wrong in quarrelling, I see,
And hate becomes not either thee or me.
How did this illwill, which I note, arise?
It never entered e'en in my surmise.

[1] A proverbial expression for a bootless errand. See Commentary.

A TEDIOUS NIGHT.

P. 257.

Oh! what a wretched night I've spent!
I didn't know what slumber meant.
So bad, that time can never score
Good deeds against me any more!
So very long it seemed to last,
That in it many a cycle passed.
I've measured, and its length appears
"The day that lasts a thousand years."

RECONCILIATION.

We know each other from to-day!
All's folded up and put away!
And nought has happened or gone by,
And you said nothing, nor did I!
But if we did, and scold we must,
Then let us still be kind and just.
For what they told to me of you,
They told it to you of me too.
Enough of absence; truth to tell,
You've tasted it, and I as well.
How pleasant then, now all is o'er,
To turn and meet again once more!

CONTENTMENT.

P. 258.

By Heaven! there is none but God above to care
For him whose lot it is misfortunes sad to bear.
The noblest He of benefactors, and of all!
Be easy on that score, and griefs will lightly fall.

Be independent both of "Amer and of Zeid[1]:
Forsake a country where you are despised and tried;
Syria be it, or Arabia, which you will,—
Where'er you go you'll find a friend and loved-one still.

A WELCOME.

Comfort of mine eye, I ween
That to-day has happy been,
Since thy face I twice have seen.

THE BORES.

There 's a bore we never cease
  Hoping we from him may flee;
But if e'er we're left at peace
  Comes a bigger bore than he!

SLIGHTED FRIENDSHIP.

Oh thou! who turnest thus from those who love thee so! P. 259.
  This thy turning from us no light thing we find:
Shew again the love we knew of long ago;
  Let not Allah see thee otherwise than kind.

In thy company is fullest rest to me,
  Take the trouble then to come and see me now.
For mine eye for ever hopes thy face to see,
  With that light of kindness beaming from thy brow.
Be as I would have thee, happy! 'Twixt us twain
  All the ties that thou wert used to still remain.

[1] See note, p. 77.

A BAD BARGAIN.

Many a man has sold his soul for riches' sake,
But the wealth accrues not, while the soul is lost.
Should it e'en accrue, no profit may he take;
Envied though he be, he's cheated in the cost.

ON A MEAN FELLOW.

A mean fellow to whom for a favour I came,
I've heard of his like, but ne'er looked on the same.
He 's a face, but no pleasant expression is there!
And wealth, but no bounty with others to share.
In fact, he's a niggardly wretch, whom you'll find
Worth nothing at all,—neither comely nor kind!

A REPROOF.

P. 260. [Written on hearing a person slander a holy man, one of the elders of the Súfi order of dervishes.]

Do you slander a person whom Allah doth raise
To such rank? who is ever the subject of praise?
By your life, what you're doing is very unfair;
Ill words about men are no light thing to bear.
You, who utter a word that's unfit to be heard!
Pray keep clear of everything foul and absurd.
You will not hold your tongue, yet no good do you say;
You've missed the right thing by a very long way.
Leave people alone, they want nothing of you;
With matters like this you have nothing to do.
These are they who have secrets with Allah on high;
We are not of that sort,—neither you, Sir, nor I!

You attempt what you're not the right man for, 'tis plain,
Alas! for your taking such trouble in vain.
You lean to the world, though devout you appear,
But they won't count you one of them—there, Sir, nor here!

ABSENT FRIENDS.

My case is strange, nor do I see
  A stranger one, where'er I turn.
For every land contains for me
  Some friend whose news I fain would learn.
Who complains of Absence, pray,
As I complain of it to-day?

NAGGING.

Blame, or blame not, as you will— P. 261.
You're unkind and nagging still.
Be not, now, the first to scold,
That will not release my hold.
Oh! deceive me not, I pray,
Nor my confidence betray.
Do not say, "I will—," "I would—,"
Talk of that sort does no good.
You, who to me unjust have been
In scolding,—you, my friend! I mean,—
I care for no one, when I see
That he cares not at all for me.
Then come on this condition, pray;
And if not,—well then, stop away.
For heaven's sake this nagging cease,
And let me have a little peace.

EGYPT.

The vale that 'twixt 'Arísh and Barḳah lies,
  O'er it may rain in frequent showers be shed!
Oh! greet from me the cool moist breeze that flies
  There, where my home is,—if "home" may be said.

A land to which whene'er I hie, I hie
  Unto an Eden where, whene'er you will,
Some Ridhwán[1] is presented to the eye!
  My longing for it makes me fancy still

That e'en the soil and stones I used to see,
  Are fragrant musk and lumps of native gold.
P. 262. Dwellers in Egypt! tell me, can it be
  Ye think that I am for your loss consoled?

There is no place for others in my heart;
  How can there be, when 'tis with longing filled?
God yet may grant that we no more shall part,
  And eyes shall dry, and panting breasts be stilled!

Oh! I will keep a fast upon that day,
  For I have vowed to keep it, long ago.
And when it comes I shall have thanks to pay,
  And, after Súfí fashion[2], will do so.

[1] Pleasure, also the name of the Guardian of Paradise.
[2] i. e. By religious exercises. See heading to poem, p. 294.

ABSENCE.

Thou art the loved one I adore,
  None else hath any charms for me;
Yet men and angels chide me sore
  For loving thee.

A mutual promise binds us both,
  Thou knowest if I speak aright,
With mutual hands our solemn troth
  We twain did plight.

Ah! would I knew the moment blest,
  When thou shalt hear my whispered vow:
With thoughts of love and thee my breast
  Is brimming now.

Alas! I make it all too brief,
  This record of our converse sweet;
But it shall fill full many a leaf
  When next we meet.

But oh! beware lest we betray
  The secret of our hopes and fears,
For I have heard some people say
  That "walls have ears."

Have pity on my doleful mood,
  My patience thou hast tempted sore;
Like thee I am but flesh and blood,
  And can no more.

At losing thee, sick unto death
  I toss upon my restless bed,
With fevered pulse and gasping breath,
  And aching head.

That horror of a sleepless night!—
  On whom shall I for succour call?
When sleep, if proverbs speak aright,
  Is lord of all!

My wearied orbs are hot and dry
  With gazing after thy fair face;
Oh! when shall my poor longing eye
  Its thirst efface?

I only crave an easy boon,
  Perchance it may remembered be;
For shame have I to importune
  So urgently.

P. 263. They say thou dost reproach me, love,
  Yet would I might my fault divine!
Say on—my life is God's above,
  My honour thine!

Let thy dear image hovering nigh
  A watch upon my actions keep;
'Twill tell thee if I close an eye
  By night in sleep.

The balmy breeze, that lightly blows,
  Shall bear a loving word from me;
Speed to her, Zephyr! Heaven knows
  I envy thee.

Speed on, and that fair maiden greet,—
  She shall not hear a word of mine!—
And say to her, "his anger's heat
  "Is fierce as thine."

Nay! gentle gale, breathe not a word
  Of anger, for I feel it not;—
'Twas falsehood; let what thou hast heard
  Be straight forgot.

Great Heaven! perish every thought
  Of wrath against so loved a maid;
Nay! if her sword my life-blood sought,
  I'd kiss the blade.

The pain she giveth I prefer
  To joy from others;—by my truth,
The injury that comes from her
  Is kindly ruth!

Each day I send my envoys there,
  But bootless do they aye return;
Each day brings forth some gloomier care
  For me to learn.

And now I bid the very wind
  To speed my loving message on;
As though I might its fury bind,
  Like Solomon!

AN ELEGY.

[On Fatḥ ed dín 'Othmán ibn Hisám ed dín, Governor of Alexandria, a friend of the poet's, who died at Ámed, in A.H. 631 = A.D. 1233—1234.]

Rest, tomb of 'Othmán! in the peace of God;
  And may my greeting in each breeze be borne.
May rain for ever fertilise thy sod,
  In full showers visiting thee night and morn.

When I survived him, I his love betrayed;
  Yet am I not one to betray a friend.
Erewhile my patience has my call obeyed; P. 264.
  Why does it now turn rebel in the end?

Thou, dead and gone! God gave thee fame so fair,
  That thy fair fame is second life to thee.
Thou hast found something to console thee there,
  While I,—nought can console or comfort me.

For home, thou hast the bowers of Eden bright;
  For friends, thou hast the houris lustrous-eyed.
In loving thee did all mankind unite,
  Upon that point no two took each one side.

They buried, on the day of his decease,
  The last of what was generous, good, and kind;
They laid him low, but memory doth not cease
  To conjure up his form before the mind,

As though betwixt our eyelids he were lain.
  Where'er I turn, his image I behold;
Until I seem to meet him once again,
  Just as we used to meet in days of old.

Were I to call him, dead although he be,
  From underground he'd answer me aloud.
Alive or dead, so sweet and good was he,
  That 'tis not needful to perfume his shroud.

A friend so dear, with whom my pleasure died,
  This double loss I cannot but deplore:
A comrade to me when by exile tried,
  He made me feel myself at home once more.

He could console me when all kept away,
  But for his loss none can console me now:
Noble of mien, with smiling face and gay,
  He never met you but with cheerful brow.

He would oblige all those who sought him, yet
  None under obligation would he lay;
So if you say "obliging," ne'er forget
  "Without an obligation" you must say.

I lose a friend; in exile, too, I pine,
  Bitter enough two such misfortunes are.
Apart from him no patience e'er was mine, P. 265.
  Too hard were patience and removed too far.

'Tis death; wherein friends may prove true no more.
  Alas for man! that fellow-man should die!
In this same way mankind went on of yore;
  Friends before us have severed friendship's tie.

Men are but travellers, ever journeying on
  Tow'rds an immortal from a mortal state.
Where else, since Adam's time, are all men gone,—
  Since Noah's till now,—if such were not their fate?

INCONSTANCY.

You ne'er were constant yet, or true,
  But with friend after friend you break;
Each day you find some passion new,
  A draught from every cask you take.

I speak the truth, no friend have you;
  So seek not to reproach or blame.
I thought that once you loved me true,
  You've falsified that thought with shame.

You blush not, that mine eye should see,
  You're hushed not, that mine ear should hear:
The tell-tales said false things of me,
  And gained their will upon us here.

I warned you; had you sober been,
  You would have hearkened to my word;
But you are full of angry spleen.
  And he by whom a song is heard
Without a heart that can rejoice,
Should never blame the minstrel's voice.

LOVE DEFIED.

P. 266.

How long shall this caprice and this fault-finding be?
Thou hast appeased, i'faith, all those who envy me!
On thee do I the whole night long my thoughts constrain;
I build, and then destroy, and then build up again.
Mayhap that I have unawares offended thee;
Then tell me what has been reported now of me.
'Twere my desire, dear love! that thou shouldst hidden lie,
Where lies the light between mine eye-lid and mine eye.
For thee I drink the cup of love unmixed and clear,
Then blame me not if thou shouldst see me drunken, dear!
Thou seest how for rapturous love of thee I die;
Thou knowest me, and yet thou dost object that I—[1].
The foes I make for thy dear sake full well I know,
Yet I pretend to treat them carelessly, as though—[1].
In love have I a nature noble as the best;
Ask whom thou wilt about me, put me to the test;
Where'er in all the world may faith and love abound,
There shouldst thou ask about me, I shall soon be found.
My friend is he to whom I care a friend to prove,
One who will ever give me weight for weight in love.
But I will ne'er regard one who regards not me;
Then, down with Love! how long shall this fault-finding be?

[1] These elliptical expressions are in the original.

LINES.

[On being asked by one whom he dare not refuse to write a poem on the last hemistich of the preceding poem, viz. "Then down with Love! how long shall this fault-finding be?"] P. 267.

"Then down with Love! how long shall this fault finding be?"
How long this shilly-shallying and deceiving me?
For love and passion, hate and absence, all I bear,
Yet, dearest! any one of these sufficient were.
Oh thou whom I to spiteful folks forbear to name,
Although in hints and metaphors I breathe the same!
My love! all thou displayest seemeth passing fair,—
All save thy turning from me,—that I cannot bear!
Such perfect beauty, perfect charms in thee I see,
Oh, would that thou from finding-fault wert also free!
Methought thou wouldst be kind, thou shouldst be so, I know;
Oh! disappoint me not, I pray, for thinking so.
That thou exceedest all in beauty I perceive,
The more, alas! thy beauty is, the more I grieve.
In love I am not like all other men, I ween,
For thee I hint at, thee I speak of, thee I mean.
As passion has become my heart's most firm ally,
So sleeplessness is now the comrade of mine eye!
Oh! how I long thy stature and thy mouth to meet,—
That seemly roll, that comely row, how fair and sweet!
Whene'er my comrade blames me for my love, I say,
My passion is enough, increase it not, I pray.
But thou dost hold another view of love than mine,
The path I walk therein is not a path of thine.
Yet if thou wilt accord with me, thrice welcome thou!
If otherwise, we're nothing to each other now.

FOUND OUT.

P. 268. How long shall this quarrel and scolding be?
This is not what I had thought of thee!
Thou, and thou, only shalt be my love,
Neither of us will traitor prove.
Hardships enough from thee I bore,
Prithee impose on me no more!
Love all unmixed I drank to thee,
Blame me not if I drunken be!
Thou wilt not, sure, unpleasant be,
Who art so pleasant for all to see!
Nay, but I am not wont, I swear,
Scolding like this from thee to bear.
Thou to deceive me then didst try,
Saying thou wert not false, but I—[1].
Speak, and relate it all to me,
This is no place for mystery.
Things which are known to all beside,
How canst thou hope from me to hide?
What has just happened to thee I know,
All of it, just as well as though—[1].
But if a case is unknown to thee,
And thou wouldst know it,—why then, ask me!

REPENTANCE.

P. 269. White used to be my sole delight,
  Till these white locks I chanced to see;
Now, white, I prithee, quit my sight,
  Yes, quit it quickly as may be.

[1] See note to page 302.

Through thee do I this parting prove
  From youth, forgetting it as though—[1].
They say, "Thou art too old for love;"
  I answer, "Nay, if that is so—[1]!"

I gnash my teeth repentantly
  Whene'er I count my years aright;
I used to grieve, in times gone by,
  At parting or a cruel slight;

Until the time of youth was o'er,
  And I from grief to grief had run.
Then growing sober, I forswore
  The wine of love, and broke the tun!

Now, when my friends the wine-cup take,
  And bid me drink as well as they,
My sleeve I in their faces shake,
  And motion them to move away.

And here a humble suppliant
  At Allah's gate I stand confessed,
Perchance that he the leave will grant,
  To enter in and be at rest.

THE DESERTED HOME.

My friends! 'twas here my loved ones did reside,
  And this my passion is as ye may see.
My friends! save you, I look to none beside,
  Then what do you two people order me!

[1] See note on page 302.

P. 270.

My friends! this is a place to start a tear,
Then wherefore tarry to shed tears with me?
But if ye help me not in mourning here,
Say "farewell" for an hour, and let me be.

I stand where whilome my beloved dwelt,
Although these ruins waste my heart with woe.
Ah! if of grief one pang were all I felt,
'Twould be enough that tears alone should flow;

But all too many are the griefs I prove,
My own against such odds I cannot hold.
Fie on my heart! I yielded to its love,
Now it rebels when I would be consoled!
My heart and I are, as has once been said,
"From Ḳais thy comrade, thou art Yemen-bred!"

DEVOTION.

I'm yours in body and in soul,
In private and in public, too,
You own me then entire and whole,
My masters!—tell me, whose are you?

I am a slave whom you have bought,
But one for whom no price ye gave;
With love for you my heart is fraught,
Aye! from the cradle to the grave.

And when ye once have gone away,
No rest or resting-place have I.
Have pity on a swain, to-day,
Who pawned in Parting's hands doth lie!

Who never hath neglected yet,
  In the great love he bears for thee,
Aught as a bounden duty set,
  Or aught wherein the choice is free.

I have a friend I worship; woe P. 271.
  To him who worships idols vain!
Joy to the heart, and grief also,
  His face encompasseth the twain!

He is the East, where Beauties rise,
  Where glisteneth Seduction's star.
My love! methinks thou dost comprise
  All kinds of beauty that there are;
Thou art mine eye, and to mine eyes
  Than slumber thou art dearer far.

How many a favour shown to me,
  How many a kindness can I trace;—
And foul, indeed, would patience be
  That bore the loss of thy fair face[1].

THE TRUE LOVER.

Beloved, by your life, I swear!
Love's secret has been kept with care.
Let other men play false, not I;
For I am true and never lie.
My love for you to God I take,
And with it grateful service make.
And no indulgences I need,
In love I hold a rigid creed.

[1] The Corân, ch. 12. vv. 18 and 83, says, "Patience is fair."

My life to you I fain would sell,
Though once I used to guard it well;
And for my love yourself prefer,
Though having many a customer!
Ye who are leaving me! I swear,
Ye make light of a grave affair.
P. 272. They said, "The swain forgets you quite!"
'Twas not, and never will be, right!
Now, by your life!—and unto me,
No oath like that can ever be,—
I've not betrayed, nor will betray,
Our compact, as those tell-tales say.
Thou, who dost think I have betrayed,
When others have the traitor played!
Had but thy love for me been true,
Thy thoughts of me had been so, too,—
Thou wouldst have seen with certain view.
Oh Someone's heart! how hard to me
Art thou! how soft am I to thee!
Ah me! whom now shall I address,—
To whom complain in my distress?
He must be badly off, whose source
Of tears appears his sole resource.

AN EXCUSE.

My lord! I did not break my word,
And fail you, of my own free-will.
Thy pardon thou dost oft accord,
Perchance thou may'st accord it still.

ON A BORE.

Wherever he shows his face, the bore,
  Freely abused and cursed he'll be;
All of the sand on "Alij' shore
  Isn't as heavy and dull as he!

You may think well of all you know; P. 273.
  Never think well of him, I pray.
He is a fellow so mean and low,
  He is a—[1] that's what people say.
He sillily follows his folly, so
  That he appears almost as though—[1].

ON A BAD CHARACTER.

Shall I a certain Sheikh defend,
  Whose character all take away,
Whose every action doth offend?
  Whatever folks about him say,
  You may believe it anyway!

WIT.

Wit is for ornament designed,
  Praise Him, who to you gave it not!
When wits were meted to mankind,
  You were not then upon the spot.

[1] See note on p. 302.

MEMORIES OF HOME.

God bless that land that to my memory clingeth!
  And, ah! how much I long for it and yearn.
I reach the soil whereon its herbage clingeth,
  And lo! my cheek and brow with radiance burn!

Where erst I found a loved one in my dwelling,
  Where youth was ever with me, long ago!
P. 274. Still of Muḥasseb by Miná I'm telling,—
  Of Abṭaḥ and Hajún that lie below;

Of pleasant days 'twixt Zemzem and the Station,—
  Of dear friends, strange or resident, we made.
Fair in the Precincts met the congregation,
  Fair was the Pulpit set up in the shade!

From No‘mán's vale the early Zephyr straying
  Told of the saplings growing on that spot.
And ample time for working or for playing,
  Whiche'er I pleased, was then my happy lot.

When life was all with pleasure gleaming brightly,
  Presenting aye fresh pictures to the eye;
The while its face was ever fresh and sprightly,
  Unmarred by frowns—in happy days gone by!

ON A SLANDERER.

He acts the madman purposely,
  But I will drive his madness out.
I know what he has said of me;
  I know, too, what he thinks about.

I hear he dares some charge prefer,
  And slanders me behind my back.
He barks at me like any cur,—
  He *is* one of the howling pack!

But on his brow I'll burn a mark,
  And both his ears I'll cut off too.
I'll be a dog myself, and bark,
  If I don't make his thoughts come true!
    Did he deserve, I'd kindness show
    And let him be; but then you know—[1]

THE DISCREET MESSENGER.

It was the truth, then, which my fancy told, P. 275.
My secrets all these tell-tale eyes unfold.
Perforce, the secret which I kept of yore,
Thanks to these tears of mine, is kept no more!
What grieves me so, dear friends, is your delay,
When you are able every debt to pay.
My life for yours! who shall my message take,
Who help and aid me for my true-love's sake.
Ask now my tears about my tale of woe,
These streams shall tell my story as they flow!
Mine eye's the spring from whence these tear-drops course;
Ask it,—'twill be inquiring at the source.
Yet, do these tears my confidence betray,
And who would ever heed what traitors say?
Accept not then my tears' account of me,
Since they, in love can never trusted be.
I swore to keep the pact between us both,
And gave my hand to ratify the oath.
A madman in my love for you I prove;
You cannot wish me to go mad for love!

[1] See note to p. 302.

I gave my wits up of my own free-will,
You might have left me my religion still!
My body's languor in your own eye lies;
For this, ye tyrants! punish not mine eyes.
Friends, miser-like, I keep your love in store,
Who never yet was miserly before.
Who in the world your substitute can be?
Who such a friend and comrade dear to me?
P. 276. With whom shall my affection be content,—
To give my grief and yearning proper vent?
I love, in all things, what is best; I ween
None but the mean inclines towards the mean.
Water not clearly filtered do I shun,
Of meat that is not well-fed will I none.
When told a thing is cheap, I let it be;
Nought but a precious thing will do for me!
I see, the dearer that a thing is sold,
The dearer place in people's hearts 'twill hold.
Friend! tell me more of what you spoke about;
Let not my fancy vacillate in doubt.
Tell me,—unsworn, for I believe you true,—
Worth thousand oaths I hold one word from you!
By heaven! at what you say I will not quake,
This heart of mine a little rest may take.
A tale of which you may the bearer be,
Must have good grounds and certainty for me.
So upon me you'll find you may depend,
Telling me of my guardian, comrade, friend.
Whate'er I say, I do; my sense of shame
Is guarantee and surety for the same;
Frankness bespeaks me faithful to my vow,
The light of Truth is speaking on my brow!

ON RECEIVING A PIECE OF POETRY.

Oh master! with whose friendship still
Unceasingly my hands I fill:
For whether thou art far or near,
How kind does either case appear!
But,—may I never miss thy face!— P. 277.
I trust thy love in either case.
I have received your verses kind,
Like gold or silver just refined!
The whiteness of the paper shone
Like two fair cheeks to look upon.
The jetty blackness of the ink
Seems like two jet-black eyes, I think.
For every letter I could count,
I kissed it to the whole amount.
'Twas scarce enough, when all was done,
To kiss it twice for every one.
What palmy days have oft been mine,
Thanks to that bounteous palm of thine.
Thou'st made my heart in absence glad,
As thou hast made mine eye-sight sad:
Perchance thou mayest now embrace
The joy of both in either place.

SLIGHT AND PARTING.

For how much longer, tell me, pray,
Shall I 'twixt loss and absence stay?
Or Slight or Parting I must bear,—
Ah! what a trouble either were!
Two enemies from whom I gain
Two hardships—nay, but hardships twain!

I know not what the cause may be
At issue 'twixt that pair and me.
They've haunted me, they haunt me yet,
Like one who duns you for a debt!
'Twas always thus my constant fate
To be in one of either state.
P. 278. And so it goes on till they have
My heart, or else mine eye, for slave!
But man must always be in dread,
With two such troubles o'er his head.
Ere he attains his sixtieth year
He tastes of either parting drear.

DRINKING SONG.

Come, sing to me, my comrade, sing!
  And fill for me the sparkling cup!
For, ere the cryer's call[1] shall ring,
  I ween we should betimes be up.

The sky is overcast the while,
  And morn is coming on apace,
Appearing like a pleasant smile
  That beams upon a kindly face.

Then, comrade! take yon liquor bright,
  And hand it here to me, I pray;
Come bring her forth unto my sight,
  And deck her in her best array.

With ecstasy and love-lorn woe,
  I am as one about to die;
Then give me wine to drink, for so
  It yet, perchance, may be that I—

[1] The *ezán*, or call to early prayers.

Old wine, which in the cup as bright
  As a believer's heart appears;
A light, of which all but the light
  Quite vanishes and disappears:

A liquor fair, whose beauty rare
  Or eye or heart with pleasure sees:
Stored up within the vault, it there
  Has lain as long as e'er you please!

And, as you hand it, do not fail
  To name it—naming me as well.
Between us you may raise the veil, P. 279.
  And never fear that I shall tell.

Ask me no more for sly pretexts,
  For pious frauds in people's eyes:
For I am one who aye suspects
  Such overdone religious guise.

Nay, sir! but after so and so,
  Give me, and tell me plain and fair;
Take all the thanks you will; I trow
  For thee no little do I care.

I have a friend, whom if I be
  Pleased not to name, your fancy may!
The day on which he visits me
  Shall be for me a gala day.

A moon to him who seeks his ray;
  To him who culls, a branch is he.
My Mentor! spare your chiding, pray.
  My Mentor now is nought to me!
I hear not, heed not, what you say,—
  Then let me,—prithee, let me be!

LIFE.

[A quatrain in imitation of the Persian.]

How oft does this life in sad trouble go by,
Yet of it how careless, how thoughtless am I!
Ah life! if to-day bring not pleasure to me,
When thou'rt gone, is there any fresh life after thee?

RETALIATION.

P. 280. So he doth now the traitor play,
Whom I did never yet betray;
And who he is I will not say!

For him have I the world misled,
Denied the things against him said,—
I would that he had died instead!

Leave him who seeketh thee to leave,
O heart of mine! and never grieve;
Deceiving him who would deceive!

And keep not love, O heart of mine!
For traitorous folk who keep not thine.
As they prize thee prize them in fine,
And judge as they to judge incline.

RESPONSIBILITY.

Was it not agreed on, pray?
Wherefore then didst thou delay?
Thou hast no excuse to own;
If thou hadst, we must have known.
What has happened then, that thou
Loosest what we tied just now?

Do not blame us then in vain,
For we spake, and spake again.
Stealthily we came to thee,
But thou didst make off and flee!
To thyself thou hast to see,
Since it all proceeds from thee;
Therefore, prithee, let us be!

THE MODERN ZOHEIR.

I am thine own, Zoheir by name, P. 281.
Thy bounty is my Muzeina.
I love the Beauty that decks thy fame,
As though it were my Butheina!
Ask thine own bosom about the same,
For 'tis, in such things, Juheina.

BEAUTY.

Hear a word of very sooth!
Help me, prithee, with thy truth.
Beauty will be beauty still,
Let the hue be what it will.

SLANDER.

What is it that you want of me?
Pray be off and let me be.
Do not, prithee, more and more
Scold me as you did before.
Tell-tales uttered words untrue,
When they talked of me and you.
Folks succeed, obtaining free
All they wish from you and me!

LOVE.

P. 282.

There's no love like mine, I trow;
I might almost say as though—
But that love indeed is strong,
As thou knewest all along!

LINES.

[Written down at the Poet's dictation, on his death-bed, by his son Saláḥ ed dín Mohammed, and addressed to Principal, Dr 'Emád ed dín ed Deríní. These were the last lines he composed.]

You never said it, and I never heard.
It was a tale unseemly and absurd:
For when you mingle among folks of worth,
They hide your vice and set your virtues forth.

MEANING GLANCES.

God bless a fair maid, who conversed with me,
With not a soul of all her watchers by!
Each had a need that love should closer be,
And had fulfilled it but for modesty.
And many a message from each other's eye
Went to and fro; and both of us could tell
The meaning of them, though we hid them well.

LOST LABOUR.

P. 283.

Now what I like about you, you whose plans have come to nought!
Is your lack of common sense, which such results at length have brought.
You're seeking one who never gave your seeking him its due;
You waste your time in seeking one who won't attend to you.

ON A QUARRELSOME FELLOW.

We have a friend we will not name,
And yet we know him all the same:
A lying and deceiving lot,—
Oh would that he no mouth had got!

A WASTED LIFE.

Youth is past and gone, but thence no profit I obtain:
Would 'twere an excess that one might remedy again.
Or would there were one work therein at which I might be glad;
Or would I had not had therein the troubles I have had.
Though to-day I weep for what has gone from me, and sigh,
Will my weeping profit me, when thus I weep and cry?
Ah, alas! for life of which the most is lost to me;
Woe is me if what remains like what is past should be.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Read my greeting unto one I do not care to name;— P. 284.
Whom I with my life would save from evils all the same!
Whom I but suggest whene'er I mention; though, I ween,
If I mention others 'tis him only whom I mean.
In the course of conversation, prithee, hint at me;
Any single hint of me enough for him will be.
Ask him, does it please him when I waste away like this?
Anything that pleases him to me indeed is bliss!
Would that my beloved one's eye could see, while far away,
My condition and the hardships I endure alway!
Am I one of Moses' people in my love so strong,
That in the wilderness of pride[1] I suffer on so long?

[1] The word التيه et-tîh, means "wanton pride," and also "wandering." It is the name given to the desert north of Sinai, (explored by the late Mr Tyrwhitt Drake and myself,) which tradition points out as the scene of the forty years wanderings of the children of Israel.

Every one who bears his name I love amongst mankind,—
Every one in whom a single trait like his I find.
Though he be away, my thoughts his lineaments can trace,
Till I fancy I am speaking to him, face to face.
No oppression fears my heart while my beloved is there,
He who dwells within that house will for its safety care!
Who is like my heart, or who like him who there doth dwell?
God preserve my heart, and him who lives therein as well!
Fairest of mankind! whose name I never will repeat;
Even though he scold me, how his scolding seemeth sweet!
God indeed hath vexed the eye thou dost, alas! forsake;
And God indeed hath blessed the heart, where thou thy home
    dost make.
Master mine! well known abroad is all this love I feel;—
How can I ever veil it then, or can I e'er conceal?
P. 285. Talking of me is a passion with the tell-tale now;
He has set himself a task concerns him not, I vow.
Who has spread abroad the tale I once concealed so well,
Till I find the very Zephyr can the story tell?
Press thy suit in humble guise, O messenger of mine!
Haply thou wilt make him bend and to thy suit incline.
Sue one who is noble, when thy suit thou would'st propose,—
Never seek for water anywhere but whence it flows.

TO A FRIEND.

Now, my life for his! whose name I have not mentioned yet,
Fearing tell-tale folk, although my heart can ne'er forget.
I would tell it freely, did he not my purpose balk;
For it does not please him to become the common talk.
People have already said a something of us both;
Were it only true, I would confess it, nothing loth.
You, for whom I suffer what I suffer, dearest friend!—
Yet will I be patient till the Lord's decree descend.
If I've said "I love another," I have but misled
Certain folks, who said about us what you know they said.

'Twas of Zeid I spoke, and yet I know no Zeid, I vow.
He was nothing but a word; the meaning of it, thou!
I have spoken oft of one, who is as nought to me,
That the mention of him might lead up to that of thee.
In my love for thee I rise supreme o'er lovers all.
Noble is the wight who thee, my lord! his lord can call.
Many envy me, oh! may they never reach their aim:
Their pretensions and my own towards thee are the same.
And their eyes have almost spoken out their hate for me; P. 286.
Till the people's eyes appear like open mouths to be.
Oh thou! who with a visit didst so honour me one day,—
Lord! do not make my master's trip of none avail, I pray.
I've a story for thee, which to-day I wish to tell;
No one but thyself can know its purport half so well.

BAD BEHAVIOUR.

How often do we see in you
Things we are unaccustomed to?
And you insinuate, in speech
Whose sense we cannot fail to reach.
You're digging up old grudges, so,
Which we had buried long ago:
And seeking treachery by a road
On which we never yet have trod.
And while your acts are acts of shame,
You call them by an honest name.
How many a story told of you
We've given a flat denial to;
And many a thing we saw, I ween,
And said that we had never seen.
But no! by Heaven it is not fit,
In company, to mention it.
I've read the lesson "how to part"
From you, nay, learnt it all by heart.

You never ceased from acting thus,
Till you at last were lost to us.
And now the foot that seems intent
On seeking you do we prevent,
P. 287. And eke the eye that ever shows
The wish to see you do we close.
And eke the mind, when ever moved
To meet with you, have we reproved.
There was an arch betwixt us twain,
But here we close it up again.
And were you Eden's garden fair,
We should decline to enter there.
And as for all that's gone before,
We do not now its loss deplore.
'Tis dead and gone, and we have prayed
Upon it, where 'tis buried laid.
We've left all mention of it too,
As though 'twere what we never knew.
Now here are both of us, I ween;—
When has it ever mentioned been?
And yet within the mind remain
Some stories, which we hide in vain.
And if you care our lives to take,
We'll freely give them for your sake!

ON A BAD GOVERNMENT.

That government,—we used to pray
The Lord to change the face of it.
Rejoicing when it passed away,
We got a worse in place of it!

ON A FESTIVAL.

The feast has come, and I have nought P. 288.
To celebrate it as I ought.
And absent from mine eyes, I vow,
Is all that I should long for now.
Ah! would that I were now aware
How you, dear friends! do on it fare.

LOVE'S ANXIETIES.

I wrote to you, and in my note explained
Of what in this thy absence I complained.
For, by thy life! since thou didst part from me,
Mine is a state thou canst not wish to see.
In Scorn's own mart I show myself for sale,
Cheap;—but to find a purchaser I fail.
And I see no one in a state like mine,
None like me in the love wherein I pine.
Grant me thy love, for that love to acquire
Is chief and first of all that I desire.
I have your promise for a year; you say,
"If not in this year—in the next I may."
This matter of my longing I submit;
My lord's opinion can best judge of it.

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

'Twould be my joy to meet with thee some day, P. 289.
  For all those beauties I would fain behold.
When from mine eye its slumber passed away,
  Its dweller left, and thou the place dost hold.
I will respect it for its lodger fair;—
Lands are respected for the dwellers there.

THE SAME.

Ah! one who fancies I recall him not!
Yet Heaven knows that he was ne'er forgot.
He thinks I love him not as erst I did:
Forbid this thought of his, kind Heaven, forbid!

DECEIT.

There, get you gone, and let me be!
  Deceit is what I cannot stand.
Wouldst have my nature changed in me?
  Oh! fie on what you now demand.
And may the day by Heaven be curst,
On which I came to know thee first!

P. 290. ## A TETRASTICH[1].

[In imitation of the Persian Quatrain.]

Oh thou! who art at once my bosom's life and bane,
To thee, in hopes of aid, of love do I complain.
The eye that looks on thee, what honour doth it gain!
The soul that knows thy love, what grace doth it obtain!

A REBUKE.

You thwarted me, and acted so;
You're great at thwarting folks, I trow.
This vice was all you used to miss;
Now you've made up the sum with this.
Yourself your modesty descried,
And chose to tear the veil aside.

[1] Repeated by mistake in the Arabic text from p. 156 (English, p. 179).

NEAREST AND DEAREST.

How shall I from my loved one hide
The trouble I have had to bear,
When he doth in my heart abide,
The nearest and the dearest there?

ON RECEIVING A LETTER.

Comes a letter from a friend, P. 291.
One I've greatly longed to see.
God to him a greeting send,
Who is sending one to me!
How kind Fate's hand has often been
Since last his well-known hand I've seen!

A MESSAGE.

My messenger! before him kiss
The ground, when you my loved one see;
And please from me to tell him this,
"That I'm as angry as can be."
He encouraged tell-tales, now
All the more they tell him lies;
How could one I love allow
What went on before his eyes?

TRUST IN PROVIDENCE.

Oh thou! who thus dost fear and doubt
What may, or may not, come about.
Thou hast a Lord, who ne'er hath yet
A hope with disappointment met.
Then pray, for doubtless He always
Doth answer every one who prays.
When thou art thus by God supplied,
Why beg of any one beside?

FAITHFULNESS.

P. 292. Fairest! who hast rendered me
So notorious, alas!
Thou art gone, and after thee,
Heaven! what things have come to pass.

Thou shalt, when we meet again,
Find a leaning in my heart.
For thee the cup of death I drain,
Ever since we had to part!
In my heart, if e'en I die,
There will still some remnant lie.

AN ELEGY.

[On one of his brothers. This too is one of the Poet's earliest attempts.]

'Alí! thy loss is hard for me to bear.
Oh Heaven! what true and faithful friend was here.
My life's pure streams, alas! perturbed were,
When I lost thee, thou friend so pure and dear!

Thy place of intercourse is vacant now,
Yet I vacate not intercourse with thee.
Glad tidings never give me joy, I vow;
Sad tidings do not grieve me after thee!

P. 293. "A perfect human form[1]" if Evil wore,
'Twould view thee, "perfect human!" with dismay.
My patience so obedient heretofore
Rebels, and now my rebel tears obey!

Has fortune left me now a single tear,
With which my wretched eye may lend me aid?
Anguish, be strong!—there is no patience here.
Rage, feverish thirst!—thou canst not be allayed:

[1] A reference to the Corán, ch. xix. 17: "And we sent our spirit (Gabriel) to her "(Mary), and he took for her the form of a perfect human being."

Do I remain, when thou alone hast gone?
  Thy soul hath played thee false, thou faithful wight!
Zoheir! can it be right thou livest on?
  'Alí! can thy untimely death be right?

Ah yes! in truth that ocean now is dried;
  And withered all that meadow bright with flowers;
And ceased that rain on which we once relied;
  Gone are its former and its latter showers.

Though accidents have made his body waste,
  Of his fair fame nought e'er shall stop the breath.
They bore his bier, whereon a light was placed
  Revealed, with mystery concealed beneath.

Wrapped in his shroud now lies the generous dead,
  While after him survives sublime renown.
Anon his fame is all diffused and spread;
  Anon it rushes, like a torrent, down.

His bounty yielded, whosoe'er might sue,
  As to her baby yield a mother's breasts.
His bounty's stream for thirsty souls I drew[1];—
  Fresh copious showers fall o'er him where he rests!

LITERARY EASE.

I am in a garden fair, P. 294.
  Alone, within a verdant mead;
And no companion have I there,
  Except the learned books I read.

[1] In a dry country like Arabia moisture is the most precious gift of nature, and hence is synonymous with bounty.

When the wine cup round I send,
'Tis but passed from me to me!
Come and see me then, my friend,
And to-night we'll merry be.

Yonder dahabeeah gay,
Seest thou not how fair? I wis,
Thou wilt only stop away
For sorrow on a day like this.

Who, I wonder, can have changed
That nature which I used to know?
Thou, who art from me estranged—
Something ails thee now, I trow!
Master, all that pleaseth thee
Is both owned and owed by me!

UNION.

Tell-tale folks have gone away,—
Bless the beasts whereon they ride!
We can meet at length to-day
Unknown to all the world beside.

Now are all the stories broached,
Which were all concealed before.
P. 295. Now are we at rest,—reproached
With hole and corner tales no more!

Envoys from our loved ones call
With presents, which for us they bring.
And, in spite of foemen all,
We've accomplished many a thing:—

Union with that love of mine,
  Generous as she is fair.
Honied kisses were my wine,
  Pearly teeth its bubbles were!
    And though all be gone and past,
    Still the pleasant memories last!

TOO OLD.

"Thou art too old for love," they say,—
  "Hast traversed all that country o'er;
"Leave love to those it suiteth, pray,
  "And wear those borrowed robes no more."

Ah! yes, I am too old, I know;
  And yet my faculties remain.
From me, on every quarter, blow
  The gusts of youth and love again.

And I have still a gentle heart,
  That ever more to love doth lean;
And in one corner lies a part
  Of whilome pleasure that hath been.

LOVE.

Love is a fire, both fierce and hot, P. 296
  And still increaseth in my breast.
Oh some one's heart! and is there not
  A corner in thee for a guest?

Here at thy door I wait anon,
  If haply thou wilt answer me.
Thou clothest me with sickness wan,
  Thy garb of health be blessed to thee!

Lo! in my shirt doth nought remain
  But traces of me, fading fast;—
A gasp of breath, which love and pain
  Have left a remnant of at last.

I hold these tear-drops cheap for thee,
  Which, but for thee, I held so dear.
If thou grant not thy love to me,
  My lot, alas! how sad to bear.

My very life-blood is thine own;
  And didst thou but to wealth incline,
  I'd say, my wealth is also thine!
O thou! to whom I make my moan,
  Thou knowest in what state I pine.

A MESSAGE.

Oh! speak thy message out once more,
  And take from me an answer plain;
By telling me it o'er and o'er
  Perchance I may forget my pain.

P. 297. Perchance thou may'st extinguish then
  These fires of thirst that rage and burn.
Oh! give my greeting to them, when
  In safety thou shalt there return:—

And say, "Peace be upon you!—ye
  "Who in your lofty castles dwell."
Repeat, with grace and courtesy,
  My answer which thou know'st so well.

O thou! who thus dost hold me; nay,
  Who leavest me in woe like this!
Why is it other people, pray,
  Thy letters never seem to miss?

It may be, when thou writest next,
  Thou'lt mention me, though it should be
But in the margin of the text.
  Forget not how, 'twixt thee and me,
  There used a friendly pact to be.

Oh! tell me, prithee, who is he
  To whom my place thou now dost give?
It cannot, sure, thy pleasure be
  That I apart from thee should live.

A MODEST REQUEST.

Now Passion holds my reins, and I
  To-day these lengthened woes must bear.
Who is there now, from whom to buy
  One heart of all those hard hearts there?

To thee, who Queen of Beauty art,
  I state my case, complaining here
To thee, my lady! my sweet-heart
  So precious! and my life so dear!

I have but this request, and this P. 298.
  Is not to thee, methinks, unknown;
Oblige me with a single kiss,—
  A present, or at least a loan!

I'll give it back,—may I be blest
  With thee!—as thou didst give it me;
And if thou need'st the interest,
  Then take it!—I'll contented be!

Fate yet may grant to thee and me
  A tête-à-tête some future day;
Or I may meet thee, it may be,
  Alone upon a lonely way!

HOPELESS LOVE.

My love is all renewed again,
  But youthful powers grow weak with me.
I love, but I can ne'er attain
  My hopes, nor keep my dignity.

When of a lover thou dost hear—
  Thyself for constant health should'st pray.
I am content to get off clear,
  With nothing to receive or pay.

Love was but a mistake that's past,
  And shall no more occur, I vow:
For I have had enough, at last,
  Of all my youthful follies now.

For youth is gone, and there remain
  These sighs alone, which now I sigh.
My faults in love are rendered plain,—
  Oh! for a kind indulgent eye.

P. 299. O heart! how many spells there are
  Would have thee now to love incline;—
Thy left-off clothes are better far
  Than these new-borrowed plumes of thine!

Then say, "Good morrow! friends, to you
  "Who in yon distant land reside;
"Now, by your life! my friendship true
  "Doth still within my heart abide."

LOVE AND AGE.

What to me is Mentor, pray?
  These grey hairs are enough to teach!
Ah! my youth is gone away,
  Yet my wish I cannot reach.

I have turned recluse at last,
  Now my ardent youth is done.
Passion's stream that flowed so fast,
  In a tiny rill doth run.

Passion! hence, my presence quit!
  Thou hast found me out this time;
And it seems as though I sit
  On the open road of rhyme[1]!

Mentor, now the secret's out;
  I have drawn aside the veil;
Ask, and I will speak about
  What will prove a pleasant tale.

I have let you be at rest;
  Leave me then at rest, I pray!
Leave me,—this is my request—
  Nothing to receive or pay!
And know that nothing e'er can be
So hidden, but that God can see!

[1] i. e. as though my position were such as naturally to suggest a rhyme or chime in with a love-song. See the Commentary.

ADVICE.

r. 300. Now, if thou'lt take advice from me,
Go, while there's something left of thee;
And do not any longer wait
For those who put off things so late.
And in one place no sojourn make;
But act as though thou wert a snake.
And only look on all mankind
With very chary eye and mind;
And put up with a crust as dole,
Displaying a right royal soul;
And be not an old woman, pray,
And ever in the corner stay.

ABU YAHYÁ.

Abu Yahyá! I cannot see
Who you, Abu Yahyá, can be.
Then talk to me, and tell me true,
Whoever in the world are you?
Are you a man or demon dread?
Amongst the living or the dead?
Far be it from you to succeed
In any single thing you need!
You'll never be a welcome guest;
I'll never hope that you'll be blest!

A VICIOUS MARE.

A friend of mine a mare doth own, P. 301.
Comprising every vice that's known.
Her vices, if a man would count,
He'd never reckon the amount.
And in her you would never see
A single point that ought to be.
She's ugly from the front, good lack!
And ugly, too, behind her back.
Her owner blushes at the sight,
As though in the absurdest plight.
For riding she's no bit of use,
You'd better ride off to the deuce!

UNAPPRECIATED.

You've got me cheap enough, God knows!
My worth appears but low to you.
May God for aye the portal close,
Through which I chanced to go to you!

You don't appear the worth to know
Of him whom you're possessing now.
I won't say "How d'ye do, sir?" though,
And won't give you my blessing now!

ON A PROUD BEAUTY.

Do not increase my love so strong. P. 302.
Lovers, when even right, are wrong!
How could I hide the love I bore,
When it was in my hands no more?

I was, through love, as one that's dead ;—
Yet was I living, my Mentor said.
Passion have I from youth possessed,—
Still it exists within my breast.
I have a love, but ask me not,
What is her proud caprice—ah ! what ?
She is a sun of beauty rare ;
The shadow, her dark and curly hair !
Cruel is she, and yet, I find,
Ever to me she seemeth kind.
After this, would that she might be
Pleased, for all else is nought to me.

THE LOVE-CHASE.

Could you but have seen me, and my love as well,
When she fled before me like a young gazelle.
Off she ran, and I ran after ; I'll be bound
You'd have seen us getting over all the ground.
"Get away from me !" she said ; I answered, "No !"
"What do you want ?" said she ; I answered, "So and so !"
Then she turned and crimsoned with a pretty blush ;
From me, not towards me, pride had made her rush.
I had almost kissed her in the face of men ;
Would I had—no harm would have come to me then !

LOVE'S MARTYR.

P. 303. Dearest and most precious in the world to me,
Ever mine and my beloved shalt thou be !
Would my mistress did but my condition know,
What it is, that I to her behaviour owe !
Wherefore does she choose like this from me to turn ?
Something lies beneath it, which I fain would learn.

Yet is my beloved what she used to be;
Say, can ever any one be more to me?
When she passed me without speaking, I declare
I could almost bite my hand off with despair[1].
In her face the noon-day sun is all displayed,
From the heat of which her lovers find no shade.
From her, lo! a burning brand of love appeared,
By my troth, our hearts were branded then and seared!
I am one of those whom love for her hath slain;
Give me joy! for "martyred lovers live again."

AN UNPLEASANT ACQUAINTANCE.

I have a friend who puts me sadly out,
His every act and whole behaviour such is.
His sight's such an annoyance, that I doubt
A Muslim's, captive to a Jew, so much is!
At last I did bring my release about—
But like a bone out of a Tartar's clutches!

A REQUEST.

This is the first request I've made to thee; P. 304.
'Twill prove how much regard you have for me.
Shew me for once what I've so often heard,—
The many favours by thy hands conferred.
The literary bond between us two
Compels me to speak freely as I do.
I will repay thee with the fairest praise,
And fill thereby the whole world with my lays!

[1] To bite the hand is with Orientals a sign of vexation.

ENGAGED.

I have a friend who went away,
But when I said, "I'll walk to him,"
He had;—so I heard people say—
A pretty girl to talk to him!
It is not that I've cut him;—no,
I'm much cut up about him, though!

TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Thou, who hast gone away from me!
God knows how much I long for thee!
Whene'er there blows a fragrant gale,
Know then that I have bid thee "hail!"

A WASTED YOUTH.

P. 305.
Oh! thou who art weeping for youth that is past,
A long time, a long time, thy sorrow must last!
Thou hast lost that for which thou thy future hast sold;
Thou knewest not what in thy hands thou didst hold!
Thou hast lost all thy boyhood,—thy manhood,—in fine,
There ne'er was a bargain so wretched as thine!
If thou wilt, then, weep on; if thou wilt not,—then, no!
These are, both of them, quite at thine option, I trow.
Ah! my friend, thou hast found one to aid thee;—for who
Knows the taste of such losses as thine as I do?
I conjure thee, rest with me a moment alone;
I will tell thee my troubles, thou'lt tell me thine own!
If, by heaven! thou needest a tear to be shed,
Leave thine own eye alone, and take mine eye instead.

A DRINKING BOUT.

A friend, with whom I always find
I'm free and easy in my mind,
Came towards me with a goblet bright,
That joined the moon's and Pleiads' light!
"Take this," said he; "Take that," said I,
"Yourself, and drink it merrily!
"Nor make me, drunk with love divine,
"More drunken with yon ruby wine!"
But thereupon he turned him round,
And looked down shyly on the ground.
"Nay, nay!" said I, "then hand it up, P. 306.
"And give it me, a sparkling cup!
"For be thine orders what they may,
"Thee I will never disobey."
So then he gave me wine, so bright,
It would have made an old man young,—
Have made you look on wrong as right,
And made you look on right as wrong!
And then we never ceased to pass
Thus to and fro the brimming glass,
Until, at last, the morning's light
Had dawned on us with visage bright.
And oh! that night of jollity,
A night like that we ne'er shall see!

FINIS.

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